BIRDS DO IT Consider a pre-Valentine peck between a green-wing macaw and its scarlet lover at the Manila Aquarium Parks and Wild Life Center in Quezon City

WORLD / A22
49 killed in New York plane crash

BUSINESS / B1
Yuchengco group buys Laurel thrift bank in Batangas

SUPER / E4
Where to take your date tonight

Kidnappers snatch Sri Lankan in Basilan

By Julie S. Alipala in Zamboanga City and Jocelyn R. Uy in Manila

ZAMBOANGA CITY—KIDNAPPERS IN Basilan have struck again, this time snatching a Sri Lankan peace worker early yesterday.

Omar Jaleel, said to be in his 40s and a member of the international civilian group

KIDNAPPERS A6

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Saturday, February 14, 2009 ** 13 sections / Vol. 24 / No. 68 P18 online www.inquirer.net

RP waiting for US move

Azcuna retires: Legacy of legal eagle

By Norman Bordadora

HIS FINAL PONENCIA, FITTINGly enough, was the Supreme Court decision ordering the return to Philippine custody of a United States soldier convicted of raping a young Filipina but who continues to be held at the US Embassy.

Associate Justice Adolfo Azcuna, who reaches the mandatory age of 70 on Monday, retired from the Supreme Court yesterday to universal praise from his colleagues for a life dedicated to the defense of human rights.

Azcuna, who met briefly with reporters yesterday, found himself defending the decision that he penned, promulgated just a few days before his retirement, which some have criticized as not going far enough.

In an en banc decision on Feb. 11, the high court ruled that the Visiting Forces Agree-

AZCUNA A6

Roses are red but Benguet growers blue

By Elmer Kristian Dasigao
Inquirer Northern Luzon

LA TRINIDAD, BENGUET—Roses are red but farmers are blue.

Flower growers here won't be celebrating Valentine's Day with the same warmth and passion as they did last year.

Extreme weather conditions and economic recession have made a dent on profits this season. The drop in temperatures in Baguio City and nearby Benguet towns has affected the growth

ROSES A10

JUST SAY IT Whether with flowers, chocolates, surprises, prayers, a note, smile, look, touch, in song, dance, hanging and yielding, be sure to say it—love you. Maria Teresa Sevilla is saying it with yellow tulips and sunshine smile; the farmer she buys at Manila's flower market, Dangwa and the latter, she gives freely. ELLEN PEREDO

DFA: What can we do? Americans not ready to talk about Smith

By Kristine L. Alave and Tarra Quismundo

A PHILIPPINE OFFICIAL YESTERDAY SAID ANY new negotiations on custody of Lance Cpl. Daniel Smith would have to wait until the Americans were ready to talk, and indicated Manila was powerless to compel Washington to sit down immediately.

"Right now, the department is very serious in coordinating with the US Embassy. But they had to approach first their experts to get their legal opinion," Department of Foreign Affairs spokesperson Ilupuni Manglibin said in a phone interview.

Manglibin said: "We don't have a policy to wait for them ... What can we do if they are not ready?"

Earlier, US diplomats made it clear they were firm in their position to keep custody of the American Marine convicted of raping the Filipina woman "Nicole" until the courts had ruled with finality on Smith's appeal.

Smith has been confined in the US Embassy compound, according to US and Philippine officials, since December 2006 after he was sentenced by a Makati court up to 40 years in jail for raping Nicole during a one-night encounter at Subic Bay Freeport. He has elevated

DFA WAITING A7

Junk VFA; treat Smith like any other accused

By Antonio K. Pangalangan
(The author is the former Chief Justice of the Supreme Court.)

COMMENTARY

NORMALLY, THE SUPREME Court is very deferential to the president in the conduct of foreign affairs. It gives the Executive Department maximum leeway in concluding treaties and in interpreting international obligations arising from them. This policy is not only constitutionally mandated but also consistent with the patriotic principle of "united abroad though divided at home."

However, the high court made an exception to this general rule recently in *Nicolas vs. Romulo* (Feb. 11, 2009). By a vote of 9 to 4 (two justices took "no part"), it ordered Secretary of Foreign Af-

JUNK VFA A8

Ping warns of backlash from int'l lending bodies

By Michael Lim Ubac and TJ Burgonio

SEN. PANFILO LACSON YESterday warned of a backlash from other international lending agencies if the Senate continued to gang up on the World Bank, and urged that the blue ribbon committee take part in the investigation of rigged biddings, if not actually take over the probe.

He said the Senate was barking up the wrong tree on Thursday when it assailed the bank for refusing to furnish the chamber copies of the documents concerning the blacklisting of three Filipino construction firms.

In separate radio interviews, Lacson deplored the hashing of the bank by his colleagues despite its having provided the government "leads to pursue" on the purported rigged bidding of projects under the National Roads Improvement and Management Program 1 (NRMP 1).

He said his colleagues should treat the issue carefully because the Arroyo administration needed the assistance of foreign banks and financial institutions to bankroll its infrastructure projects and other social services.

Lacson said he would bring up the matter during the Senate majority's caucus on Monday. He said he would also propose that the Senate blue ribbon

PING A4

'Every year they try to stop Valentine's Day' in Saudi Arabia

RIYADH—IT IS THE EVE OF VALENtine's Day in Saudi Arabia—and as usual the florists are hiding away their red roses.

Toy stores have cuddly red teddy bears and candy merchants have heart-shaped red boxes of bon bons in stock, but all are hidden out of sight.

It is the annual battle between Saudi romantics and the feared Mutawa, the Islamic police, who each year try to convince the public that Valentine's

EVERY A10

Romance layered on fairy-tale presidency

NEW YORK—SHE'S A BUSY mother of two and a full-time executive at a film distribution company, but sometimes Susan Margolies can't help it. She "Googles" US President Barack Obama and his wife Michelle, one to check on his latest policy initiatives, but to see what they're doing as a couple.

"They went to the Kennedy Center with the girls the other night," Margolies reported excitedly. "Isn't that cool? And I love how they always make time for date night. They seem to have a real romance going."

Just in time for Valentine's Day, it's the season of the PDA in the White House—and we're not talking about Obama's prized BlackBerry. The first couple's constant Public Displays of Affection have many people across the country fascinated, charmed and even a little jealous of this 21st-century White House marriage.

To be sure, the Obamas aren't the first openly romantic couple in the White House. Former US President Ronald and Nancy Reagan, in particular, had a famous love story.

But to many, the Obama marriage represents a much more modern kind of White House romance: Two people who have both had important careers, who are trying to balance professional success with family stability, who are both playful with each other and routinely

ROMANCE A10

TOUCHY, FEELY The Obamas, Barack and Michelle, have been observed to do a lot of kissing and hugging in public, not to mention their signature fist bumps. They're very much into PDA (Public Displays of Affection).

Munti studes cash in on puppy love to keep kids in school

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

SHE'S GOT A CRUSH ON HIM.

Aira Bartolome, a high school sophomore, pulls out a wallet-sized photo of a cute boy, shows it to a classmate, quickly hides it, and flashes a shy smile.

He doesn't know, whispers Bartolome, a student of Muntinlupa Science High School. She's too shy to approach the boy, much less talk to him.

But thanks to a photo taken by a classmate, she can look at her crush anytime she wants to.

A group of sophomores at the Muntinlupa Science High School in Muntinlupa City have offered to take photos of their classmates' crushes for a fee.

It's puppy love and a good cause. The students involved in the fund-

MUNTI A10

Second FRONTPAGE

WEATHER FORECAST

TODAY: Cloudy and Monday will experience mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshower which may trigger flashfloods and landslides. The rest of the country will have partly cloudy to cloudy skies with isolated light rains.

Metro Manila		Luzon	
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	Aparri	Cloudy with Rains
Tuguegarao	Partly Cloudy	Clark	Cloudy with Rains
Legaspi	Partly Cloudy	Tagaytay	Cloudy with Rains
Masbate	Partly Cloudy	San Jose	Cloudy with Rains
Pagasa	Partly Cloudy	Virac	Cloudy with Rains
Laoag	Partly Cloudy	Cayayan Valley	Cloudy with Rains
Dagupan	Partly Cloudy	Iloilo	Cloudy with Rains

EZ2 (Lotto 2/42 draw date) 16 21 18 7

SUERTRES (2 PM draw) 6 3 8

(2 PM draw) 3 9 9

FOUR DIGIT (9 PM draw) 3 8 0 7

SUERTRES (9 PM draw) 1 2 4

MEGALOTTO 6/45 (Lotto 2/42 draw date) 1 2 10 12 32 41

P6,578,177.40

Palace: No mass layoffs in gov't

By TJ Burgonio

BUDGET SECRETARY ROLANDO ANDAYA HAS STRESSED THAT there would be no mass layoff of government employees this year.

If anything, the government is even hiring 60,000 new teachers, policemen and nurses this year, he said yesterday.

"Let me clarify that for this year there will be no mass layoffs. In truth, we will have mass hiring in the national government," Andaya said in reaction to protest rallies over the reported doubling of government jobs.

Andaya explained that no one would be laid off under the job rationalization program that government has been implementing since 2005 to abolish redundant positions.

He said the program covered only those employees who opted to retire.

Andaya said some 9,200 positions have been vacated and abolished since the program was implemented and some P1 billion in savings have been realized.

"Nobody has complained that they were forcibly taken out of their jobs. That 9,200 vacated positions [represented employees who] all retired on their own. So our rationalization plan still remains," he said.

A government employee has three options under the plan: he or she can be retained if his or her skills are still needed; redeployed to another agency; or opt for retirement or early separation with incentives.

"Those who want to stay in government are welcome to stay in government. No one will be forced to leave," Andaya said.

The Confederation for Unity, Recognition and Advancement of Government Employees (Courage), a progressive public sector union, has claimed that the rationalization program would displace a large number of government employees.

Andaya said under the scenario will happen. He said the Department of Education will be hiring 18,000 new teachers, and 2,000 non-teaching personnel this year.

With Artic Agolito

WOMEN members of Task Force Mapalad show their emotions during a press conference yesterday

Farmers return to Mendiola

FARMERS FROM MEGROS OCCidental and Leyte marched back to Mendiola yesterday, despite some 40 of their members having been taken when their march last Thursday was dispersed by police.

Jose Rodito Argaña, Task Force Mapalad chair, said that they will not stop in their campaign with President Macapagal-Arroyo for the passage of legislation to extend the land reform program. House Bill 6077 and Senate Bill 2666 to extend the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program for another five years are pending in Congress.

"We will continue to return to Mendiola until our appeal is heeded. If we do not get genuine agrarian reform, we have nothing. We have nothing to return to in Negros and our lives are in danger," Argaña said.

"If the bill is not passed, it is as if we have also been killed," he added.

Some 300 farmers and members of the TF Mapalad and the Negros Occidental Federation of Farmers Association (NOFFA) marched back to Mendiola yesterday, accompanied by priests and nuns, to press Malacañang for a response to their appeal.

On Thursday evening, the group had camped out on Mendiola for some eight hours before being tuned down and dispersed by police. The group said some 40 of their members suffered bruises and abrasions from being allegedly hit by police shields and from the pressure from the water cannon.

Annamarie C. Andrade

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Moody's sees slower than forecast growth

GROWTH IN THE PHILIPPINES WILL LIKELY slow to 2.0 to 3 percent this year, lower than government forecasts, as remittances from overseas Filipinos decline and dampen consumption, credit rating firm Moody's Investors Service said on Thursday.

The government expects the economy to grow at least 3.7 percent this year after a 4.6 percent expansion in 2008.

"We think it will be below the government forecast," Tom Byrne, a Moody's senior vice president told Reuters regarding growth this year. "We think it will probably be between 2 and 3 percent."

Byrne said Moody's would hold its next scheduled review of the Philippines in three to six months, rather than one year from now, due to uncertainty about the country's economic outlook linked to the global downturn.

Positive outlook

Moody's affirmed on Thursday its positive outlook on the Philippines' credit ratings. It ranks the country's sovereign debt at four notches below investment grade.

Remittances, equivalent to more than a tenth of domestic output and a major driver of consumption, are expected to drop 5 to 10 percent this year as subsiding global economy puts pressure on wages of Filipino workers abroad, Byrne said.

"It's one of the biggest risks," he said on remittances.

"It's really important is the balance of payments, to economic growth, to household consumption, even residential investment and also to the stability of the peso, which is a key thing."

The possible drop in remittances, a reversal of about 23 percent growth based on the latest data for the first 11 months of 2008, may depress the local economy, he said.

"Looking at the year as a whole, we would expect the pesos to weaken," Byrne said. "It's any workers' remittances collapse in the first half of this year, then there would be an effect on the peso."

But the country's external payments position was likely to remain in surplus this year on an expected plunge in the import bill due to falling oil and commodity prices provides a cushion in the balance of payments (BOP) and the current account.

The Philippines was the world's biggest rice buyer last year when the price of the grain hit record highs. It also imports almost all of its crude oil needs.

Byrne said the government's plan to pursue more foreign financing via loans from development lenders such as the World Bank and Asian Development Bank could also help prop up the BOP, which fell to $$6.6 billion surplus last year—a four-year low.

On Wednesday, Banko Sentral Gov. Amando Tetangco forecast the BOP surplus to come in above $500 million but below $2 billion this year.

The Philippine government, reacting to Moody's affirmation of its outlook, said it would aim to boost its finances by improving tax collection and seeking additional tax measures. Reuters

ROSES FROM THE NEW BOSS
Arturo Lomibao, newly appointed administrator of the Land Transportation Office, gives roses to women employees during yesterday's Thanksgiving Mass and pre-Valentine's Day celebration at the LTO main office on Elana Avenue. Lomibao took over the helm of the agency earlier this week. (MARIANNE BERMUDEZ)

Paule: From hospital to Pasay jail to clinic

By Marlon Ramos

FROM THE COMFORT OF HIS air-conditioned room at a posh hospital in Quezon City, Jaime Paule was subdued to a small bedroom room at the Pasay City jail to spend his first night in isolation on Thursday night.

But not for long.

Ushered by prisoners as the likely and manipulator of the grossly anomalous distribution of P728 million in fertilizer funds, the businessman was ordered jailed for three days after the Senate cited him for contempt.

Paule was brought in a 10-square-meter room on the second floor of the four-story prison building by members of the Senate Sergeant-at-Arms Office after he was discharged from St. Luke's Medical Center.

At around 1:40 p.m., however, Paule was taken to an air-conditioned room at the jail infirmary after he complained of chest pains. His doctor had said their patient had been suffering from asthma and a bloated carotid artery.

Supt. Silvestre Abando, the warden, quoted the jail doctor as saying that Paule's condition was stable and that there was no need for him to be moved to a hospital. But the patient had not restricted to his isolation room as of press time.

Abando, however, insisted they were not giving Paule special treatment. "We treat him like any other inmate here," he said.

Jail guards told reporters that Paule slept on the floor, using a discarded mattress for a mat.

But a video taken by radio reporter Joseph Javier, who was allowed access to the businessman for some minutes, showed Paule on a makeshift wooden bed with a foam mattress. Javier said Paule appeared "healthy."

Meanwhile, Paule's lawyer asked the Supreme Court to order his client's immediate release.

Rodriguez Ipacio said they would also file a complaint to the Commission on Human Rights to question the "arbitrariness" of Sen. Richard Gordon in ordering Paule's detention.

Is he the same wanted man?

By Julie M. Aurelio

JAIME PAULE, THE ALLEGED RAGman in the so-called fertilizer fund scam, could also be the accused subject of a two-year-old arrest warrant issued by a Quezon City court for issuing checks amounting to P468,000 that bounced.

Documents obtained by the Inquirer showed that a certain "Jaime Paule" is facing four counts of violation of Batasang Pambansa Act Blg. 22, popularly known as the Bouncing Check law, after issuing checks that were not covered with sufficient funds to a doctor at the St. Luke's Medical Center on 1989.

Judge Augusto Diaz of the Metropolitan Trial Court Branch 37 issued a warrant for the arrest of "Paule" on Feb. 1, 2007, for failing to appear in court hearings.

"However, we do not know personally if it's the same person who is jailed in Pasay, as the spelling of his name in our database throughout court documents and letters of request by the complainant," the employee said.

Paule's lawyer Ferdinand Topacio said he was unaware of the bad check case.

Birds ground Cebu Pacific jet

A CEBU PACIFIC PLANE LANDed safely in Tacloban, Leyte, airport despite flying into a swarm of birds that left one of its engines damaged yesterday morning.

The Civil Aviation Authority of the Philippines, in a statement, said a "bird strike" damaged the left engine of Cebu Pacific flight 5J562, an Airbus 319, as it was about to land at the airport at around 6:30 a.m. yesterday.

A source at the Cebu Pacific confirmed that the engine of the plane, which had 125 passengers on board, ingested a bird shortly before landing.

According to the Cebu Pacific source, passengers reported a popping sound as the plane approached the runway. The passengers did not panic, the source said, because the plane was already on the ground.

The aircraft was normally taxiing "unassisted," the source said. Jerrikho L. Alave

BIR prepared to be bad guys

BAGUIO CITY—THE CHIEF OF THE BUREAU OF Internal Revenue has rallied his tax collectors to the face of the worsening global economy with this call: Prepare to be the bad guys.

Commissioner Jose Ingreso IV said this meant hounding businesses to make them remit correct taxes and ignoring their protestations to government—even though the financial crisis might dictate that taxpayers should be treated with kid gloves.

Taxpayers who failed to file tax returns would be immediately subjected to penalties. Businessmen who underdeclared their earnings by as much as 30 percent would be sanctioned quickly, he said.

Importers and bonding bodies with an unresolved frustrated issue of the nineteen area were urged to settle.

"They are plead economic slowdown, but tax agents must make them aware that they have been underdeclaring profits even before the slowdown," he said.

Ingreso's remarks in meeting with BIR employees here on Thursday said becoming the most trusted agency in the country inspired respect, if the United States Internal Revenue Service was to be the BIR's model.

"I am prepared to be the most unpopular man in the country... [and] I am ready to back everyone every step of the way [when you follow my lead]," he said. Edsel Cabreza, Inquirer Northern Luzon

PDEA cites gains vs corruption

THE ANTICORRUPTION DRIVE BEING waged by the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency (PDEA) in its ranks posted gains in 2008.

The gains were numerous, PDEA director Gilroy Lim said, especially in the conviction of 6,849 (from 5,492 in 2007); completed the training of 250 new drug enforcement officers (DEOs); filed criminal charges against two police officials; five DEOs and 39 police witnesses; put up internal controls in processing; computerized the monitoring of all field operations and legal processes; and greatly improved the delivery of frontline services through automation.

Berlie tried the financial, professional and technical assistance of the Presidential Anti-Graft Commission (PAGC) in the run-up for the PDEA's 255 "organic" DEOs.

He said that in the past, most of the agency's officers were borrowed from other law enforcement agencies, and, "being assigned to the PDEA temporarily, many of them were naturally vulnerable to corruption."

But he said that after a cleansing process initiated by Director-General Dionisio Santiago and the establishment of the PDEA Academy through the help of the PAGC, "we now have our homegrown DEOs who are fully trained to resist corruption and adhere to the highest standards of public service."

The next batch of 150 DEOs will graduate from the academy next month and another 200 will start training in April.

The PAGC's support for the agency's recruitment, training and other assigned programs began in 2006, the year Santiago took over the leadership of the anticorruption agency, Berlie said.

P200-M pot in lotto draw tomorrow

By Julie M. Aurelio

THE PHILIPPINE CHARITY SWEEPSTAKES Office (PCSO) said it expected the Super Lotto jackpot to hit P200 million by Sunday, a little more than a week after the pot breached the P100-million mark.

"I think we can meet that target, considering that the prize in the previous draw went up by P25 million, which was beyond our expectations," PCSO spokesperson Jo Lamy Cedro said yesterday.

He said that with a four-day window, bettors would have enough time to pick their choice numbers and buy their tickets before Sunday night.

Long queues

"We also would like to remind our betting public to place their bets early as there will surely be longer queues at lotto outlets this weekend," Cedro said.

No one won the P174,247,280.80 jackpot on Thursday night with the six-number combination of 01-11-16-30-34-42.

It was only on Feb. 3 that the prize of P135,181,684 topped the P100-million mark for this year.

"We were surprised that the prize reached P174 million on Thursday. I think people are more encouraged to place their bets if they know that a bigger prize is up for grabs in the coming draws," Cedro said.

The biggest prize ever of the 6/49 Super Lotto was P369 million posted in April 2008, and won by a construction worker from Novaliches in Quezon City.

Joker testifies to back former client's alibi

By Erika Sauler

IT LOOKED LIKE OLD TIMES.

A human rights lawyer during the martial law period, and now a member of the Senate, testified yesterday at the Manila Regional Trial Court (RTC) that an activist linked to murder cases that allegedly happened in 1982 was in fact under detention from 1983 to 1986, and could not have possibly participated in the acts.

Sen. Jinkoy Estrada's testimony supported the alibi of Manuel Laillad that he was detained in Camp Guillermo Nakar in Quezon province at the time the crimes reportedly took place.

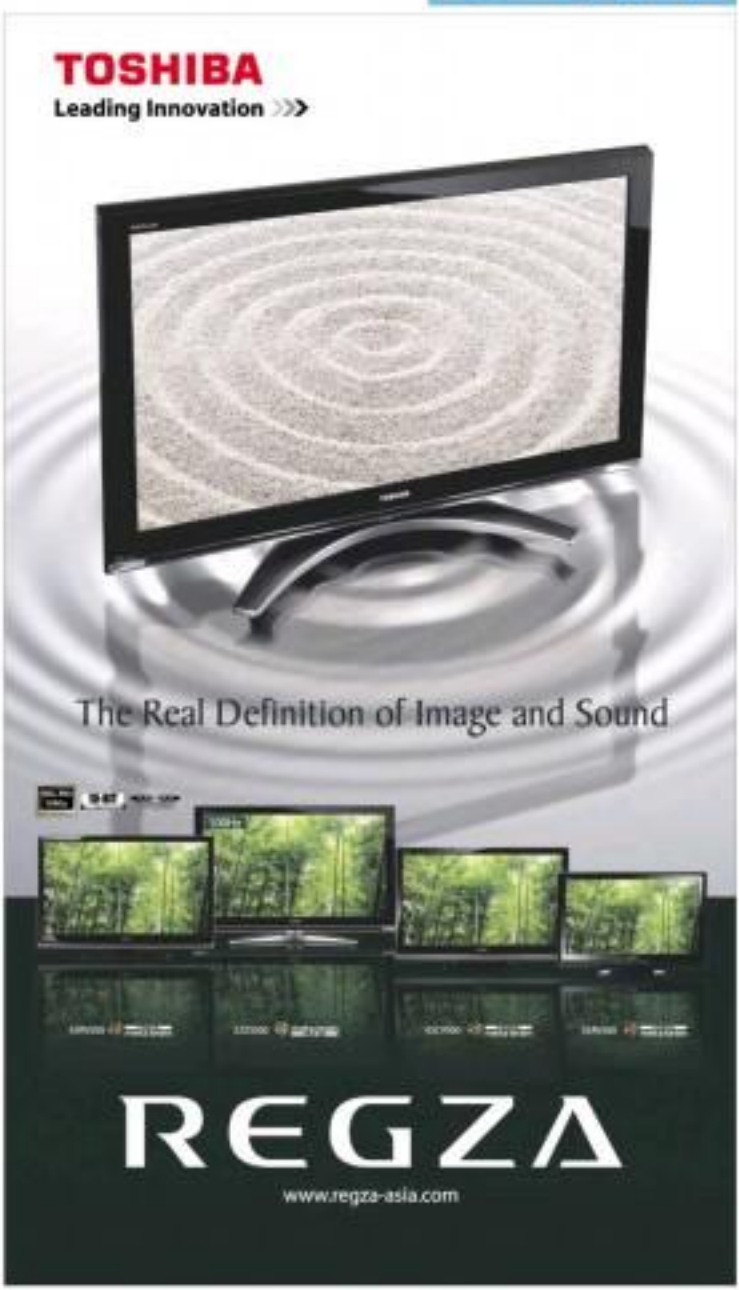
Laillad, a director of the Bayan Muna party-list and board member of Selda Hanabayan ng mga Detenidong Lahat sa Demokrasya), had been accused of masterminding a purge by communist rebels of suspected government spies within their ranks in Inopacan, Leyte, in 1985.

Along with the peasant leader, the other concerned are party-list Rep. Satur Ocampo, Communist Party of the Philippines founder Jose Ma. Sison, Bayan Muna Democratic Front supporting party-list chair Luis Jalandoni, Walang Sinag Publishing Inc. Philippine deputy secretary general Randall Echanis and 49 others.

Judge Thelma Bunyi-Medina of Manila's RTC Branch 22 had issued a subpoena to the senator the other day on Laillad's request, in relation to the latter's motion to quash the "baseless and malicious charges trumped up against him and other activists."

Bunyi said the court he personally handled the conspiracy to commit rebellion case filed against Laillad for which he claims was detained in Camp Crame from 1983 to 1986. He said he saw Laillad in every hearing.

"I cannot forget the Laillad case because I had to wake up at 4:30 a.m. and had to travel for four hours to Lucena (Quezon). And I would be driving alone in my car. Going back took another four hours," said the senator. "Laillad was only released along with other political prisoners after Edsa I," he added.



generics wholesale

Ping warns of backlash from int'l lending bodies

From page A1

committee take part in the joint inquiry or even take over the entire investigation.

"That's one of the things that the majority will have to decide on," he said, expressing confidence that he would be able to get enough votes from his colleagues after presenting his arguments.

He also warned that corruption in the government would continue to fester if the Senate abdicated its role as facilitator and if the Office of the Ombudsman failed to prosecute public officials.

'Wrong focus'

Lacson was commenting on how the second hearing of the inquiry into the purported rigged bidding played out on Thursday.

"Mind being mad? (and) crap or (my) nombal (in senate we have to survive), " he said, adding that it should not be the World Bank in the dock.

He said the joint committee digressed from the real focus of the inquiry—the purported collusion of contractors and government officials in connection with public works projects funded by the World Bank.

"The core issue here is as simple—corruption in the bidding, corruption in the implementation. So why can't we appreciate the pertinent information given by the World Bank that will help us conduct our own investigation? Why are we demanding evidence from the World Bank?" he told radio dzBB.

He added: "We can't implement infrastructure projects on our own. We will have to rely on loans because we have a budget deficit every year. If this is how we treat the information shared by the World Bank, this may lead to a serious backlash." Lacson said that apart from the World Bank, the government should be wary of offending the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC).

3-hour hearing

"If they all decide not to (extend loans to us), can we afford it?" he said. "That can have an immense effect on our credibility. We are not sensitive to what they are sharing with us. Actually, they are helping us by sharing information. I'm (not) convinced. We should appreciate and verify this information before we conclude that the World Bank is at fault."

Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago presided over the 3-hour briefing as chair of the Senate committee on economic affairs, which jointly conducted the inquiry with the committees on public works and on finance.

The joint committee navigated the World Bank and its officials for not furnishing the Senate a copy of the Federal Report it had given the Department of Finance and the Office of the Ombudsman as early as November 2007.

The video tape issue with the "confidentiality clause" invoked by the World Bank in barring the two agencies from "distributing" the Behrland Report is using it as evidence against the persons mentioned.

In the end, the joint committee decided to summon World Bank Country Director Bert Hofman to show proof of the purported rigged bidding, in effect shifting the burden from the persons implicated in the corruption controversy, including President Macapagal-Arroyo's husband Jose Miguel "Mike" Arroyo.

During the hearing, Senate Majority Leader Aquilino Pimentel said the World Bank's invocation of confidentiality was misplaced.

Hofman is "washing his hands like Pontius Pilate," Pimentel said, adding that even "crooks" had the right to be prosecuted under the rule of law.

"Once (it demeans) our own integrity as a nation when we demand that the World Bank come across with that official report, and not say it is confidential! My goodness, we just have to put our feet down, not because we are trying to collude (with) and cover up the misdeeds of people," Pimentel said.

'Too proud'

Over radio dzBB, Lacson said it was inappropriate for senators or government agencies to conclude that the World Bank was sharing "incomplete and hearsay" rights after receiving the information.

"If this kind of attitude continues, the dire implications is that the World Bank may close the faucet [of loan facilities], and the ADB and JBIC will follow suit," he said.

According to Lacson, the Arroyo administration will incur a budget deficit ranging from P75 billion to P160 billion this year.

"If we can round us our feet, then we should bear, that if the revenues is up by 10 percent, gasoline sorties, duties roads and bridges, and condoned ailing buildings are insufficient, then let's not be too proud because we can't economically rely (on these banks) for foreign borrowings," he said.

In the dzBB interview, Lacson said the hearing, which adjourned at past noon, should have been allowed to continue.

He said that instead of "World Bank bashing," the hearing should have focused on the details and circumstances of the purported irregularities, including names, process and amounts.

Lacson said he was hopeful that the inquiry would yield positive results because Santiago had announced that she would hold more hearings.

He also said Ombudsman Merceditas Gutierrez could very well conduct an investigation into an law cases were withheld a complainant.

In a bind

Budget Secretary Rolando Andaya said that since the World Bank was now overview of last report, the Senate should defer to the Office of Ombudsman and let it complete its investigation of the purported rigged bidding.

Andaya said the government was in a "bind" because the World Bank had insisted on its non-publication pending investigation.

"I myself requested a copy, but I was ignored," he told reporters at a briefing.

Given the circumstances, today said, it would be prudent for the joint committee to reconsider its plan to summon Hofman, and for the Office of the Ombudsman to complete its investigation.

He said the Senate could resume its inquiry after Ombudsman Gutierrez releases her office's findings.

"At the Ombudsman said, they are about to wind up and conclude the investigation. Once they submit their findings, then the Ombudsman would be open to scrutiny and questioning on how she came up with the conclusion," Andaya said.

"That should be the proper time for the senators and all the other parties concerned to ask questions on the basis of the findings of the Ombudsman," he said. "In the end, you can scrutinize the document."

More loans

Despite the controversy, the World Bank is increasing its loans to the Philippines under its Proposed Country Assistance Strategy, according to Peru Secretary Cerge Remonde.

"It aims to increase its lending program in the Philippines by an average of $700 million-$1 billion per year in the next four years. The proposed lending will reverse the negative net transfers and will result in an increase in the Philippine share of total World Bank lending to 3.6 percent," Remonde said in a text message.

Andaya said the proposed increase in equalities under NDRP 1 were no longer an issue for the World Bank.

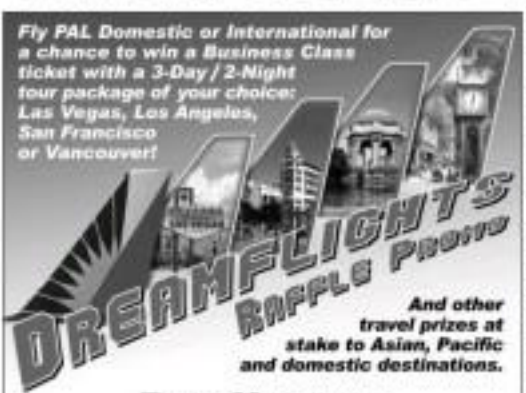
Believes in place

"If there are people who are liable for violations of the (anti-) graft law, they should be held liable," he said. "But in terms of a working relationship with the World Bank, we have gotten over this. Reforms have been set in place. Adoption of country systems has taken place."

"This is it now since," Andaya said, adding that the government is was involved when the World Bank approved NDRP 2.

"The amount that was suspended by the World Bank to NDRP 1 is $315 million out of a total package of $150 million," Andaya said.

"[For] NDRP 2, it is $230 million—even a bigger package. And there is a proposed NDRP 3, which will cost around $200-250 million ..." he said.



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Kidnappers snatch Sri Lankan

From page A1

Nanotechnology Foundation, was taken by gunmen from his resort's home office in Barangay Hubangan, Lamitan City, at around 2 a.m., said Chief Supt. Wilfredo Tenajas Jr., head of the Western Mindanao Directorate for Integrated Police Operations.

Asked to the 69th to be kidnapped in Basilan this year.

The motive of the abduction is unknown, as well as the affiliation or identity of the kidnappers, both authorities said. Abed's group said.

"The Nanotechnology Foundation does not pay ransom and requests all parties concerned to seek a nonviolent return [of Abed]," the group said in a statement.

Basilan Vice Gov. Al Rasheed Sakuldad said some "very young" Asians, possibly Indonesian nationals, entered Abed's house-office, ransacked it, and forcibly took him.

Nathan Isarog, executive director of the Sulan Integrated Resources Foundation, quoted caretaker Gil Tom as saying that the gunmen searched the room and took his cellular phones, a digital camera and a bag belonging to Abed.

Tom said he fled after being fired upon by the gunmen, whom he described as "dressed, plain soldiers and speaking in Tagalog."

Pursuit operations

On the phone with the helpmen to Manila, Lt. Col. Edgard Arevalo, the spokesperson of the Philippine Navy, said the military was "not involved in any (but this) is another abduction-for-collect ransom until a demand for such is made known to the authorities or family members."

"Pursuit operations by the Marine Battalion Landing Team are ongoing," Arevalo said.

He said the Navy would spread up the deployment of 120 soldiers belonging to the 67th Marine Battalion Company to address the situation.

The unit, trained in commando operations, was recently pulled from an undisclosed province in Luzon to help military and police troops bring to an end the mounting cases of kidnapping in Basilan and Sulu, Arevalo said.

The augmentation force from the Navy arrived in Zamboanga City on Thursday to undergo standard operating procedures such as medical and area briefing before being deployed to Basilan, he said.

Trained, unarmed civilians

Asked if Abed's abductors were linked to the separatist Moro Islamic Liberation Front or the Abu Sayyaf Islamic group, military spokesperson Lt. Col. Ernesto Torres Jr. said: "That is in the realm of possibilities, but the motive of the abduction could be totally robbery."

Torres pointed out that the gunmen took Abed's valuables before he was taken away.

The Nanotechnology Foundation, which described itself as a "neutral nongovernmental organization," is composed of trained, unarmed civilians from all over the world.

It has been working closely with local officials, civilian agencies and community members to promote peace in Basilan, according to the statement posted on its website.

It said it was "doing all it can to ensure [Abed's] safe return and was urging his captors "to release him unharmed as quickly as possible."

Lamitan administrator Danilo Alvarez said the Nanotechnology Foundation had been "doing community service" in the city for the past two years.

"He is not a Muslim preacher," Isarog said of Abed, who has been staying in Lamitan for the past four months. "He is a engineer, a community organizer, a human rights advocate, and we are [conducting] training and education on human rights here."

Rash of kidnappings

Abed's abduction was the latest to rock southern Philippines, which has seen a rash of such incidents including the Jan. 15 kidnapping of Red Cross aid workers Andreas Notter of Switzerland, Italian Eugenio Vagni of Italy and Mary Jean Lacaba of the Philippines.

The three were abducted and are still being held by Abu Sayyaf bandits in Jolo.

In Basilan, the earlier kidnappings were blamed on the Abu Sayyaf group, whose top leader Galib Andang, also known as Commander Robot, was killed in a military offensive on Jan. 15.Said Board boo dogs kaze, and Eleazar Cuenca, who was abducted by armed men and managed to escape from their on Feb. 8.

On Feb. 1, a 9-year-old boy was snatched by armed men. A day later, two aircraft mechanic workers—Arcilesi Bali Biang and Jun Pantin, were also kidnapped. Biang was freed on Feb. 6.

3 more

While government troops were scouring the areas where Abed was reportedly taken by his captors, three persons were abducted in Barangay Khong Abong in Maluso town, a municipality in Basilan province.

Commander Ernesto Parua, commander of the Naval Forces in Western Mindanao, said armed men flagged down a passenger jeep in Abong-Abong and took three passengers.

"It's good that our personnel were near the area. Nightshalakan squad (They pursued the kidnappers yesterday.

Parua said two of the passengers—Sinaida Adalani and her five-year-old daughter—were recovered, but the third, Hadji Mahita Bida, remained captive.

According to Vice Governor Sakuldad, the abduction of the three jeep passengers in Maluso was connected to Notter's kidnapping.

Sakuldad said he had received information that Hadji Mahita's relatives were behind the Maluso incident.

RP doc off the hook in US health fraud

MADISON, WISCONSIN—A dozen defendants who allegedly swindled the US military's health care program out of hundreds of thousands of dollars in the Philippines won't face justice in any courtroom after another defendant killed himself.

The US Attorney's Office in Madison, Wisconsin, has dismissed indictments against the suspects—Philippine doctors, spouses of military retirees and one Navy veteran—because of lengthy pretrial delays.

Several of them had conferred in their roles in schemes in the 1990s and early 2000s in which they filed fraudulent claims to the military's Tricare program, which paid out money to cover health services received, usual records show. They were indicted between 1999 and 2003 as part of an investigation into widespread Tricare fraud.

Extradition

But US authorities failed to bring them to justice. They decided to wait for the suspects to stepfoot on US soil so they could be arrested but they either never did or weren't caught. In 2006, prosecutors finally asked the Philippine government to arrest and extradite five of the suspects for Tricare wrongdoing listed.

The 12 cases were dismissed last month after US District Judge Barbara Crabb in Wisconsin threw out an indictment against a Filipina doctor accused of submitting $2 million in fraudulent claims. Crabb said she could no longer hold many of the trials because investigators waited until 2008 to arrest him when he set foot in Guam, four years after he was indicted.

Crabb said the delay made it difficult for the doctor to prepare a defense because the passage of time meant the memories of witnesses had faded. She said prosecutors' "decision to do nothing for more than four years" wasn't justified.

Based on that ruling, Assistant US Attorney Peter Jenny said it was clear he had to dismiss cases against the others. He said it is difficult to quantify the exact amount they were accused of obtaining fraudulently. Court documents suggest it was at least $400,000 but likely more since prosecutors did not file charges for every suspect claim.

Among those getting off the hook is a doctor who told investigators how she would make false claims on behalf of military retirees and their dependents and then give them a portion of the money.

She gave investigators bulging books filled with the names of patients her client had falsely claimed to treat. "I know it was fraudulent but I just took the risk," she told investigators.

No charges

Also getting off:

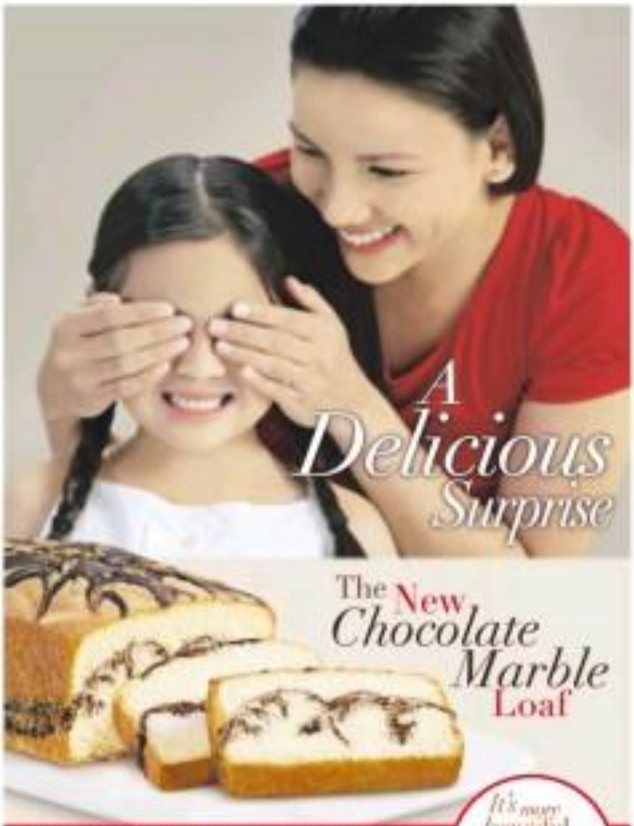
• A US Navy retiree, who was accused of working with a doctor to submit 21 false claims for him and his dependents totaling $130,000.

• The wife of a retired Marine who submitted false claims totaling $49,000 for her and her child.

• The wife of a retired US Air Force servicewoman who said she used her windfall to pay for her children's education. "I know what I was doing is wrong," the woman told investigators.

The defendants never appeared in US court or even had definite attorneys since the cases against got off the ground.

Prosecutors have defended their decision not to seek extraditions in some cases, arguing the Philippines government would likely fail to honour the request in both it. They cited one example in which a suspect learned of his warrant through a newspaper and went underground. AP



Correction

IN THE FEB. 13 ISSUE, the front-page story—"They want to kill me," says Mike Ar—misstated that Barry de Quiros is currently a board member of the Philippine Drug Enforcement Office. According to the PDEO spokesperson, Dr. Larry Lwin, de Quiros is no longer a member of the board, having resigned in 2009.

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Saturday, February 14, 2009
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Palace says its hands are 'tied' on Smith case

By TJ Burgonio

MALACAÑANG YESTERDAY said its hands were "tied" on the question of where convicted US Marine Daniel Smith should be detained but hoped the Obama administration would "be more considerate" on the sovereignty issues involved.

Press Secretary Cerge Remonde said the government could not exert negotiations on the transfer of Smith to a Philippine jail because the American's conviction for rape was not final yet.

"What if the lower court's decision is reversed by the Court of Appeals? So Malacañang actually has its hands tied on the issue," Remonde told reporters.

Not in a hurry

"So you can say that we are not in a hurry. We want to attend to things with great expedition, as far as practicable. Misleading couldn't do anything but maintain the status quo because of the state of the case," he added.

But since the conviction becomes final and executory, "I would like to assure you that we will enhance all possible remedies in enforce the sovereignty of the Philippine government and the Filipino people," Remonde said.

Remonde, however, said Malacañang wasn't precluding negotiations by the Department of Foreign Affairs on a new custody agreement, even before Smith's appeal was resolved.

"I'm not foreclosing that," he said. "We leave that decision to the Department of Foreign Affairs."

Remonde said the perception that the government was soft on Smith was largely fueled by "ideological forces or reasons."

"We have to be governed by the principle of international law and comity," he said, explaining why the Executive Department wasn't in a rush to negotiate a new custody agreement.

'More considerate' Obama

Remonde expressed hope for a favorable action from the Obama administration.

"There's a new American administration, and I think President Barack Obama, in all his pronouncements, has said that he wants to change the face of the United States or the image of the United States for the rest of the world," he said.

"This complex agreement with that, the United States will be more considerate about issues of sovereignty. But I still reiterate that this government and this administration will always fight to impose its sovereignty well and its sovereignty," Remonde added. RELATED STORY, A7

Junk VFA; treat Smith like any other accused

From page A1

Jose Alberto L. Bautista "to hold talks with United States representatives for Lim's appreciation agreement" which governs activities where US Lance Corporal Daniel Smith shall be detained pending the latter's appeal of his conviction for the rape of "Nicole."

Recall that after convicting the American and sentencing him to reclusion perpetua on Dec. 4, 2006, Judge Benjamin T. Pozon of the Makati Regional Trial Court ordered his detention at the Makati City jail. Smith immediately appealed the RTC judgment to the Court of Appeals.

Romulo-Kenney accord void

On Jan. 28, 2006, however, "a contingent of Philippine law enforcement agents, purportedly acting under orders of the Department of Interior and Local Government," suddenly brought Smith to a detention facility in the US Embassy in Manila, pursuant to an agreement signed on Dec. 19, 2006 between Secretary Romulo and US Ambassador Kristie A. Kenney.

In the 8th 11 decision, the high court, speaking through Justice Adolfo S. Azcuna, held that the Romulo-Kenney accord has no legal basis because the Visiting Forces Agreement (VFA) between the Philippines and the United States requires that an American soldier who appeals a conviction by a trial court should be detained "in Philippine authorities" within Philippine territory.

And while the two governments are negotiating to relocate local jail Smith would be confined, "the status quo shall be maintained until further orders by the [Supreme] Court."

This latter "unlawful" simply means that Smith would indefinitely stay in the US Embassy until the diplomats of both countries come to an agreement on where to transfer him. Or until after the Court of Appeals and possibly the Supreme Court resolve (1) the appeal and (2) the guilt of Smith. This negotiation and appeal process could take years. Note that the present reservation refers only to his confinement, while his appeal is pending final judgment. This is consistent with the constitutional provision that capital offenses are bondable.

A superseding event

The unanimity of four (Chief Justice Reynato S. Puno, Justices Romeo J. Callejo, Ma. Alicia Austria-Martinez and Conchita Carpio Morales) did not distract because they wanted Smith to remain in US custody. They wanted him transferred immediately and without need of further negotiations to the New Bilibid Prisons in Muntinlupa, pending the final resolution of his appeal. They believe that the VFA itself, not just the Romulo-Kenney accord, is unconstitutional and void. Hence, Smith should not be given any special treatment arising from the void treaty. With due respect to the majority, I believe the dissenters are correct.

First, in Bayan vs Ermita (GR. 95, 30980), the Supreme Court has already declared the VFA constitutional. However, to borrow the words of Justice Carpio, a "supervening event" (the crime) on March 23, 2006 when the US Supreme Court held, in Medellin vs Texas, "that a treaty, even if ratified by the United States Senate, is not enforceable as domestic federal law in the United States, unless the US enacts the implementing legislation, or the treaty by its terms is self-executory and ratified by the US Senate as such."

Under this Medellin ruling, penned by US Chief Justice John G. Roberts, concurred in by five US justices and dissented by three (the same tribunal that are only nine justices in the US Supreme Court), the VFA is not enforceable in the United States because the US Congress has not enacted any law implementing it and because the 1998 "Bayan-normal" is not self-executory (in fact, the US Senate has not even ratified the VFA. On the other hand, since the Philippine Senate ratified it, the VFA is enforceable as domestic law in the Philippines.

Unequal legal status

This unequal legal status of the VFA—not enforceable as local law in the United States but enforceable as local law in the Philippines—violates Section 25 of Article XVII of our Constitution, which requires that "foreign military bases, troops, or facilities shall not be allowed in the Philippines, except under a treaty concurred in by the Senate ... and recognized as a treaty by the other contracting State."

This phrase "recognized as a treaty by the other contracting State" means that the VFA should have the same legal effect in the United States as in the United States. Even the Azcuna decision expressly admits that the VFA must be "equally binding on the Philippines and the foreign sovereign State involved. The idea is to prevent a recurrence of the situation where the terms and conditions governing the presence of foreign armed forces within our territory were binding on us but not upon their foreign State."

Despite that hallowed reassurance, the majority still upheld the VFA's validity on the ground that the VFA "is simply an implementing agreement to the main RP-US Military Defense Treaty" (MDT) that was ratified by the US Senate. Granting this argument of the majority to be correct, still there is no assurance in the MDT that, "by its terms," it is self-executory. Neither is there any US law that implements it. Thus, under the Medellin decision, neither the MDT nor the VFA is binding in the United States.

Medellin vs Texas

In Medellin vs Texas, Jose Ernesto Medellin, a Mexican citizen, was convicted of rape and murder. In his appeal before the US Supreme Court, he argued that his arrest was illegal because the police failed to inform him of the right guaranteed him by the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations (April 24, 1963) to notify the Mexican consulate of his arrest and detention. The US Supreme Court ruled, however, that, despite the ratification of the Vienna Convention by the US Senate, US courts are not bound to enforce its provisions because of the absence of an enabling US law. Thus, Medellin's invocation of any right under the Convention was rejected.

What is the use then of the Vienna Convention which, like the MDT, is a non-self-executing treaty that was ratified long ago by the US Senate but unimplemented by an enabling US law? According to Roberts, it creates "an obligation under international law on the part of the United States." The remedy of an aggrieved party in case of a breach of this obligation would be a suit before the International Court of Justice in The Hague.

Checkmate the ICJ

However, before it can be sued, the United States must, under the United Nations Charter, first give its consent. It must first agree to "submit to ICJ jurisdiction." But even if it does and even if the ICJ eventually decides against Senators, the US government can still refuse to obey the decision. In the words of Roberts, "submitting to jurisdiction and agreeing to be bound are two different things."

How then can the United States be made to obey an ICJ decision? Under the UN Charter, only the Security Council can call attention to non-ICJ decision. However, the United States can still checkmate the ICJ because, again in the words of Roberts, "the United States retained the unqualified right to exercise its veto of any Security Council resolution."

The inevitable conclusion is clear, under the Medellin ruling, there is no way that the United States can be forced to honor its commitments under the Visiting Forces Agreement because the VFA is not recognized as federal law in the United States.

Worse, the VFA violates our Constitution because the United States does not recognize and honor it as a treaty the way the Philippines does. The Philippine legal remedy? Junk the VFA and consider Smith like any other accused, whether Filipino or otherwise, and confine him in a Philippine detention facility immediately.

'Blur on our sovereignty'

Because of the Medellin decision of the US Supreme Court, in which even the US President could not force our opponent in the Philippines has no choice but to apply the same decision if the Philippines must insists to self-respect as a sovereign nation. As Puno wrote, "This blur on our sovereignty cannot continue, especially if we are the ones perpetuating it."

Clearly then, the United States cannot fault the Philippines should our Supreme Court declare the 98 unconstitutional and ignore the special treatment given to Smith because of the 98. After all, Philippine courts cannot be bonding the US Supreme Court to Medellin vs Texas, a decision that binds the US President and US foreign policy.

Azcuna retires: Legacy of legal luminary universally praised

From page A1

term—which governs the conduct of US soldiers participating in joint military exercises in the Philippines—expired ... then funds be disbursed by Philippine authorities to Philippine territory and not in the US embassy where he has been held since December 2006.

It ordered Foreign Secretary Alberto Romulo to negotiate with the US an appropriate agreement to govern where Smith should be detained pending the resolution of the latter's appeal on his rape conviction.

And while these negotiations are going on, the status quo would prevail, that is, Smith would remain in the US embassy, the high court said.

The ruling came after the decision ordering Smith's transfer would mean is nothing of the US refusal to negotiate an acceptable Philippine detention facility, Azcuna admitted that the high tribunal can only give orders to the Philippine side.

'We can't order US'

"The US is not a party to the case. The court ordered Romulo to negotiate. That is the procedure," Azcuna told reporters just before he went into what would be his last en banc session.

The court also ordered Romulo to report to it every 30 days on the negotiations.

Azcuna said the court decision ordering Smith's transfer would mean is nothing if the US refuses to negotiate an acceptable Philippine detention facility. Azcuna admitted that the high tribunal can only give orders to the Philippine side.

'We can't order US'

"The US is not a party to the case. The court ordered Romulo to negotiate. That is the procedure," Azcuna told reporters just before he went into what would be his last en banc session.

The court also ordered Romulo to report to it every 30 days on the negotiations.

"It's forthwith. Look it up in the dictionary," he said.

Asked whether he considered his ponencia on the Smith case personally significant as it came on the final days of his Supreme Court magistracy, Azcuna said, "every ponencia is significant."

His colleagues, led by Chief Justice Reynato Puno, held a special en banc session yesterday to honor Azcuna on his last day on the bench.

In his valedictory, "Saving Society, Seeking Justice," Azcuna cited what he considered the most memorable decisions of the courts that he served, under Chief Justices Hilario Davide, Artemio Panganiban and Puno.

Innovative approaches

These were: The decision to validate the writs of the Arroyo government's personal items during a period when no constitution was in force immediately after the first People Power Revolution; the one where, with him as ponente, the high court "pulverized the calibrated preemptive response" of the Arroyo administration; and the one ordering the Move Manila Development Authority to clean up the Manila Bay.

"I cited these three decisions of Cha Davide, Panganiban and Puno courts because I wanted to show to the other courts that in risk of achieving justice, his creatively fashioned innovative approaches and made use of legal remedies to serve the cause he rebels we are put here...to do justice to every person," Azcuna said in his speech.

Chief Justice Puno said, "Legacy of a legal luminary," credited Azcuna...during his stint as a member of the 1986 Constitutional Commission that drafted the 1987 Constitution—for introducing the "novel provision" that gives the Supreme Court the power to "promulgate rules concerning the protection and enforcement of constitutional rights."

"We can see the depth of Justice Azcuna's vision in the second provision he authored in our 1987 Constitution... his avowed purpose to restore that constitutional right to see remedy declaratory but also executable," Puno said.

Azcuna gets credit for amparo

Puno, who is widely perceived to be the main proponent of the writ of amparo, gave the credit to Azcuna for being the first to introduce the legal relief to victims of rights abuse violations.

"He leaned heavily on the foundation knowledge of Justice Azcuna in drafting the rule on the writ of amparo for it was he who first introduced this writ of liberty in the deliberations of legal thought," he said.

According to Senior Associate Justice Consuelo Ynares-Santiago, Azcuna (who is tempted to make the writ of amparo part of the country's basic law, being before the Supreme Court since 1999 as a rule for issuing the law in extra-judicial killings from 2001)

A FEW GOOD MEN Eve of dawn, Associate Justice Adolfo Azcuna retires from the Supreme Court on Monday his 70th birthday. By the retirement rites on Friday, Chief Justice Reynato Puno presents him with the Lady Justice Statuette, part of the 12-Token presentation during a special en banc session of the court. ERWIN SANTIAGO

"You would mention... what would have happened had the 32-year-old nonentity," Santiago said. Azcuna was 32 years old when he was elected to the 1971 Constitutional Convention.

Azcuna, who Santiago described as one of the few handful of Filipinos to have had the opportunity to help craft the country's Constitution twice, first tried to have the writ of amparo considered by the 1971 Constitutional Convention, a year before the late dictator Ferdinand Marcos declared martial law and trashed the civil rights that the writ would have guaranteed.

Trailblazing

Azcuna again tried to have the writ of amparo explicitly provided for in the 1987 Constitution but failed again.

"But there is no stopping amparo. With Chief Justice Reynato Puno and Justice Azcuna, the Supreme Court came up with the trailblazing adoption of the writ [in 2003]," Santiago said.

According to Azcuna, he thought he had lost the chance of becoming a Supreme Court justice when he passed up two opportunities to be appointed to the tribunal.

"President Aquino wanted to appoint me but I advised her to consider the senior candidates in the list here appointing from outside the judiciary," he said.

Azcuna held several government posts during the Aquino administration—as presidential legal counsel, press secretary and presidential spokesperson.

According to Azcuna, Aquino wanted to appoint me but my family was against missing our apple and some of my kids were not through schooling then. So I said, maybe it wasn't meant to be," he said.

In 2002, President Macapagal-Arroyo appointed Azcuna to the high tribunal, with Aquino "strongly recommending me."

"I have served in all my years give at hand. This area is seven, together with 14 others, in that most difficult of callings, namely: To effect in the real world, through the instrument of law, substantial justice between person and person and between person and State," Azcuna said.

Seven justices retire in '09

Azcuna's retirement is the second in a year in which seven justices are scheduled to bow out of the high court.

Justice Dante Tinga resigned last Jan. 3 and was replaced by Sandiganbayan Presiding Justice Diosdado Peralta.

By the time all the high court vacancies are filled, Puno will be the only Supreme Court man-date appointed by Gloria Arroyo.

Puno was appointed by President Fidel Ramos in 1995. Mr. Arroyo named him Chief Justice in 2006.

The specter of a court unduly influenced by Mr Arroyo has prompted civil society members to form watchdog groups like the Bantay Korte Suprema and Coalition for Judicial Reform. Which to examine the background of the nominees recommended by various groups to the Judicial and Bar Council.

The JBC is a constitutional body responsible for screening candidates for the bench. It submits a shortlist of at least three names for the President to consider whenever there is a vacancy in the tribunal.

RP waiting for US to move and can't force it to sit down now

From page A1

his case to the Court of Appeals.

A new farce erupted over the custody issue after the Supreme Court last week ruled that the US-Philippine executive agreement that allowed the embassy to keep Smith was meant to cover the two countries' Visiting Forces Agreement. The court ordered the DFA to immediately negotiate with the US the transfer of Smith to a Philippine-controlled facility.

DANIEL SMITH: Gaining weight

Main concern

Mangudadatu said the DFA had started the "process of coordination" with the embassy on the issue of custody, based on the Supreme Court ruling. He told the DFA was also consulting the Department of Justice and local government, and the Solicitor General.

"Our main concern is to look for appropriate arrangements for [rapist Smith]," he said.

The embassy has said it is studying the court decision and referred it to government legal experts in Washington.

Mangudadatu said formal negotiations could begin after the embassy had received the legal opinion from Washington and that in the meantime, Smith would stay at the embassy compound.

3 scenarios

Interior Undersecretary Marius Corpus said yesterday that after his last check on Smith on Feb. 3—or several days before the high court's ruling came out—he met with an embassy political officer and disclosed three possibilities to anticipate if a court decision.

In that meeting, Corpus saw the embassy's steadfast position to continue holding on to Smith until the appeals process had been completed. After his December 2006 conviction, Smith was briefly held at a Makati jail before the embassy took custody of him—in the middle of the night—based on the controversial executive agreement.

"We talked about the possible consequences of the Supreme Court decision," Corpus said. The discussion was not prompted by any advance information on the court's eventual ruling, Corpus said when asked if there was any leak.

"This, that the Supreme Court would declare the VFA unconstitutional. Two, I said it's highly probable that the court would affirm the 1950s conviction, including the agreement [to hold Smith at the embassy], and that it would order some provisions of the VFA revised," Corpus said by phone.

"Third, that everything will be upheld, both the VFA and the transfer [of Smith to the embassy]."

Lobby for Smith

Corpus said when the issue of custodial arrangement was brought up, the US side said: "We've already agreed on that. We'd like to continue what was agreed upon."

Corpus said he heard that a congressman from Smith's home state of Missouri was "lobbying in the State Department for it to take care of Smith."

"That's the reason why they defined Smith so much," Corpus said, adding however that he had no categorical information about the supposed lobby.

Also discussed at the meeting was Smith's condition while in detention, particularly his having gained a lot of weight, according to Corpus, who said he had been visiting Smith almost monthly.

"They (the embassy officials) said, 'We should give him work, with your permission,' so that he will not deteriorate physically," Corpus said.

Corpus said he agreed, noting that similar activities were allowed locally prisoners. He said he just asked that any chores given to Smith should not compromise the terms of his confinement.

'He is bored'

"We can see the emotional stress in him," Corpus said. "Every time I talk to him, I can see that he is emotionally suffering. He is very bored. The condition is even better in detention facilities outside, where [detainees] have some company."

Corpus assured the Nicole camp that Smith remained inside the embassy compound, contrary to claims by some of the rape victim's supporters that he had been spirited out of the embassy.

"Even if I visit him every day they will not believe me," Corpus said.

Send him to Miami

Bayan Muna Rep. Satur Ocampo has joined growing calls for Smith's immediate transfer to a local prison.

"We demand that the Philippine government immediately effect the transfer of Smith to the New Bilibid Prison," Ocampo said in a press statement. "We cannot understand why a clear-cut exercise of sovereignty, in this case custody over a convicted foreign felon, should be subject to negotiations."

Ocampo added: "What the Philippine government should do is simply impose its own laws over a foreigner who violated these laws. It should not negotiate but order the US Embassy to turn over Smith to the proper local authority."

Indefinite delay

The leftist lawmaker said the high court's order for the DFA to arrange a detention place acceptable to Washington was just a ruse to "indefinitely delay" Smith's transfer. With a report from GEC Cabacungan Jr.

Munti studes cash in on puppy love to keep kids in

From page A1

raising activity hope to generate P7,200 (Sh 9,664) in one week, enough to feed a child in school for one year under the World Vi... tion program in the Philippines.

The "service" began last year after first-ye... teacher Marie Ethlee Cabalo challenged her students to come up with a fund-raising sc...

Maynilad

NOTICE OF WATER SERVICE INTERRUPTION

MAYNILAD is upgrading its pipe network in Manila as part of its continuous effort to improve water service in the West Zone.

Duration: February 23, 2009 (FRIDAY) until February 25, 2009 (SATURDAY) 10:00 PM 4:00 PM

Activity: Replacement of 3 units 300mm gate valves, 1 unit 750mm gate valve and 1 unit 300 mm check valve along C.M. Recto corner Benavidez St., Manila

THESE PROJECTS WILL RESULT IN A TEMPORARY WATER SERVICE INTERRUPTION IN THE FOLLOWING AREAS IN MANILA:

1. Area bounded by C.M. Recto, Juan Luna Avenue to A. Rivera
2. Areas along A. Rivera from C.M. Recto to Quiricada St.
3. Areas along Quiricada St. from A. Rivera to Road Avenue
4. Areas along Road Avenue from Quiricada to C.M. Recto, including all streets inside the said boundary such as F. M. Guerrero, Nares St., J. Abad Santos, P. Sanchez, Alvarado, Narciso Road, Mesenguhan, Benavidez, Mayhaligue, Bambang, Lucero, Alvarez, T. Alonzo, Kneeng, Lordi, Socorro Ramos, Makata, T. Mapua, Anacleto, Fugoso, Gimenez Jose, Lope de Vega, E. Bermejo, Balagtas Elementary School, Chung Kai Shek High School, P. Algue, La Torre, Arsenio, Tabora, Trinidad, Illness, and other connected alleys and tributaries.

MAYNILAD IS ADVISING CUSTOMERS IN THESE AREAS TO STORE ENOUGH WATER FOR THE DURATION OF THE WATER SERVICE INTERRUPTION.

For any concerns, call the Maynilad Hotline 1626

Spy photos

"I want to empower my students," Edlyn says. "Children can do a lot of good in society."

Valentine's Day was easy to Likith Hasso, who won a Twitter-ness then, thought of offering a service she and her classmates would have call "spy photos."

"I have many classmates who are too shy to approach their crushes so I knew this activity would become popular," Issac says.

Hasso and her team sold some 200 photos last year so they decided to hold the activity again this year. They also vowed to continue what they've started—help enroll in school a child in Malawi.

Her team got orders from schoolmates—P6 for a wallet-sized copy or P10 for a standard 3R size. They use digital cameras to take pictures of the subjects.

Spy photo earners many of their schoolmates because the "photographers" keep the identities of their clients secret. But students Bartolome says she is confident her crush does not know she had ordered his photo last year.

There are no privacy issues on the part of the subjects, however, as the photographers ask their permission, especially since some clients request particular shots.

Popular teen

For instance, some of those who ordered photos of sophomore Kizzy Gaucan want her wearing sunglasses. Others want her without the glasses.

Gaucan, whose picture sell... briskly, regardless say, has fun posing for the pictures. "I'm flattered many people admire me," she says, happy to knowing that money from her photos will help enable a poor child to school.

World Vision is a global Christian organization working in poor countries. It has been doing welfare work in the Philippines since 1957. Its core purpose is to look for sponsors to send poor children to school, but it also organizes communities and sends aid during calamities.

Songs and love letters

Three sections in the sophomore level and three sections in the freshman level have organized fund-raising activities at the Montalupa Science High School this week. The sophomores hope to continue sponsoring two children while the freshmen aim to sponsor a new child.

To meet their targets, the students have diversified their services.

Of course, there is the traditional selling of heart-shaped chocolates and balloons, as well as flowers. But freshmen students also offer to serenade their classmates' crushes and write love letters for a fee.

"Most of our classmates cannot express themselves in their emotions, so we help them through songs," freshman Samantha Aquino says.

Falling in love with Jerry

Calado smiles as she observes her students eagerly talk about their projects. She giggles as she recalls how she discovered World Vision and established a relationship to sponsor poor children.

It all began when she fell in love with Jerry Tan.

FOR THE FUN AND THE FUNDS OF IT Fourth-year students Aira Mae Ortiz (right) and Alfred Cayman of the Mandaluyong Science High School serenade a fellow student's crush, friend or sweetheart. Funds raised will be pooled to help sponsor scholarships under the care of World Vision.

VENDORS FOR A CAUSE Fourth-year students of the Mandaluyong Science High School Rejeanne Mae Enriquez Jr. show their homemade cookies for sale to raise funds for the education of children in Malawi.

Happy Valentine's Day!

Romance layered on fa

From page A1

respectful, and who aren't afraid to display their affection and closeness—again and again.

Quick waggle

Remember when she found in for a quick waggle as they walked the parade route together on Inauguration Day? It was quite in a flash, yet the photo made front pages across the country. Or the widely circumvented moment on Election Night in Chicago's Grant Park, when the two embraced, he whispered something into her ear and she whispered back: "I love you."

Then there was inauguration night, when the two closed their eyes and somehow managed to dance as if they were alone, not at the center of thousands of pooping fatcheeks. YouTube clips of them dancing are accompanied by gushy comments like: "This is sooooooo romantic! I've LOVED it every TV."

Presidential whoopee

From the floor at the Obama Home Street Ball, Kirk Dillard, an old friend of Obama's from their years together in the Illinois legislature, marveled at what he was seeing.

"Just looking at Michelle and the president having fun up there on the stage—you could tell they were having the time of their lives," says Dillard, a Republican state senator, who like Obama, commuted between Chicago and Springfield, Illinois.

"Michelle and Barack have always been really in love, they've always been best friends, and she's always been his closest confidante. Their relationship has remained constant in all levels and it's wonderful to see."

Joanne Cole, editor of the women's magazine, Marie Claire, wouldn't help having a neighbor thought so she watched the inaugural coverage from afar.

"You feel there's some real presidential whoopee going on, and more power to them," says Cole.

Modern couple

On a more serious note, Cole sees the Obamas as the first in the White House to really represent a modern couple making it work, with all the (tasteful) and (un-tasteful) trappings.

"I think it is theoretically inspiring," Cole says. "He couldn't have done it without her incredible support—and the glaring hint that big chance. But I don't think anybody thinks Michelle has given up her career. The minute he's out of office, she will be stepping it up. A true partnership is about paying the bucks."

A rebuke of the American media, Stephanie Cozart, is struck by how different the Obama marriage is to White House partnerships that preceded it.

Role model?

"We've seen love in the White House before, but it seems easier to see the advisors with, along the lines of Nancy Reagan," says Cozart, a professor at Evergreen State College in Olympia, Washington. "What the Obamas have is a healthy, couple love, a mutual respect, and we Michelle's got a lack of awe and of subservience."

Indeed, Michelle Obama had to

'Every year they try to s

From page A1

Day on Feb. 14 is a heathen holiday not suitable for the homeland of Islam.

This year is no different—as attackers have spent out from shelves of a year-old Idivia reminding people that Islam does not recognize Valentine's Day, which originally commemorated one or more Christian martyrs called Saint Valentine.

Dreamy-eyed students

According to media reports this week, the education ministry sent out circulars about the proscribed day to its offices to prevent the more vulnerable—dreamy-eyed students—from succumbing to Western-created thoughts of romance.

Meanwhile supermarkets have stocked away red gift items that might get them shut down for a day or two, and chocolate shops have done the same.

Mattresses watching

Two days before the big day a florist in Riyadh's upmarket Sulaimaniyya district was shipping out wreaths of red roses and chocolate apples in the middle of the afternoon, the time that previous day, including the Mutawa, is at work.

"Every year they try to stop

n school

HOMEMADE. computer-printed cards, too are sold by Carlo Gomera, Mary Rose Ann Alcantara and Kennedy Mamaril Pile.

...ers students at the Mandaluyo ...ines, Reina Abiles and Angelito ...nd and white shandalaan for ...e of the children of World

...Saturnino Serafin's ...o Asian students in the ...TV series, "Meteor Gar... he played the charac... ing Si.

...says she was extraordinary ...d brother in a private ...ding a lasting life unrel... a star of the TV series.

2 Things'

...only started to believe in ...," 20-year-old Calado ...ting as she accurately ...e plot of the series that ...y years of Asia and was ...n the country in 2003. ...e learned that Tess ex... ...ed Patrick.

...n, Calado already ...ar Soledad Vicuna. It is ...d to the book, "12 Little ...ry Filipinos Can Do To ...Creativity," by lawyer ...Lucero.

...h, Soledad Calado runs an ...a reference in her bookmarchitecture class, recommends child apon workshop with World Vision.

Commitment

"I wanted to help but I don't have enough money," she says.

Her wife hesitated, but Calado brought the idea to her students.

"It involved money and I was worried about what their parents would say," she now laughs.

But her students got so excited and came up with various fundraising ideas. That was three years ago.

Although the first batch of students now belong to different universities and don't see each other much anymore, they remain committed to the World Vision cause. They still pool their money and continue to sponsor the child they started sending to school three years ago.

"Now I know why I became a teacher," Calado says.

Roses . . .

From page A1

and quality of roses and other blooms. The overall demand for flowers has also gone down.

"Although the stores still bought from us, some of my clients ordered less flowers. The order for roses was 40 percent fewer this year," says Marivic Sabella, who owns a 3,000 square meter rose farm in Bulacan.

Flower stalls at the Dangwa bus station in Sampaloc, Manila, rely on flowers grown like Sabella in deliver blooms on special occasions like Valentine's Day.

Most profitable month

Sabella says they deliver flowers to Manila all year round but February is their most profitable month.

"On ordinary days, only two trucks (carrying roses) go down to Manila, but on Valentine's Day approaches, five trucks go down [to Manila] every day," Sabella says.

Roses are first sent unsullied and stored in warehouses hours before they are shipped, it must can carry up to 7,000 long stemmed roses.

Sabella says aside from delivering, the villages of Alno and Magsing have also grown flowers. Together, the three villages can produce up to 30 truckloads of flowers for daily delivery to Metro Manila.

But the unusually cold weather in Benguet has affected the growth of roses and other flowers. On Jan. 15, the mercury even dropped to 7.2 degrees Celsius, the lowest recorded this year.

"A lot of our roses bloomed late [in your because of the cold weather]," Sabella said. "The temperature should not be less than 15 degrees Celsius for flowers to bloom."

Farmers only started getting rain in early last week until Wednesday. They were rushing to ship flowers to Metro Manila and other provinces in time for Valentine's Day.

airy-tale presidency

...tone down a tendency early in the campaign to joke about her husband's domestic failures—such as forgetting to put away the butter—as his saintly morning breath.

The very notion of how the Obamas met is a matter of lore. Michelle Cooper, the man his assigned mentor at the Chicago law firm Sidley & Austin. So right off the bat, "there wasn't the cold sense that the guy is a leader," says Cooper. The story also reflects a modern sensitivity in at least five cities, Cooper says, women in their 20s earn more than men in the same age group.

The Obama have been called role models for so many things—could they be reasonably expected to serve as one for boot by marriages, too? That may be taking things too far.

"I don't think they're going to cause couples to develop better relationships," Cooper says. "But it is nice to have one's relationship reflected in the White House, or one's desires for a relationship."

Dillard, for one, says he looks at his old friend and wants to learn from him in this way too.

"It helps me in my own life," says the legislator, 52, who like Obama has two young daughters. "I want to be more like the Obamas in the way that I adore my wife and relate to my children."

Still romantic

Of course, there's the other side of it—watching the Obama marriage can create a little jealousy or even a sense of pressure to achieve the same thing.

"It worries me because, how many years have they been married, and they're so romantic?" asks Gwenlyn Lucas, a New York mother and author. "It's real pressure!"

Like so much about the Obama presidency, the relationship may simply be a sign of a multifaceted generational shift.

"There's in a generation where parents kiss each other in front of their kids," says Amber Mei, editor of Us Weekly, the celebrity magazine that has made frequent use of smiling shots of Obama, his wife and family.

And it's eminently possible that the Obama marriage is fascinating and inspiring to only Obama supporters—cartoonists of guilty comments on YouTube aren't expected to say who they voted for.

Fairy-tale aspect

"In a sense, it's people who love this president so much, and so they love the woman he loves, too," says Mei. "For them, there's already a fairy-tale aspect to this presidency, and to have the romance layered on top of that, it just makes it all the more intriguing."

Still, Mei thinks the public as a whole is genuinely fascinated with to first real glimpse into the emotional life of a president. "Don't we know anything about a president's romantic life is so unusual," says Mei. "Just to even think they have one is so intriguing."

Priorities straight

And, Democrat or Republican, it's hard to ignore that this president, when it comes to affairs of the heart, has his priorities straight.

"First of all," he said to the crowd at the first inaugural ball, "How good looking is my wife?" AP

stop Valentine's Day'

Valentine's Day," said a Pakistani deliveryman as he packed the wreaths into a van. "The Muslims will come tonight. If they catch me they will take all of these and destroy them." The Western version of Valentine's Day—lovers raining flowers, chocolates and cute, all with a red theme, on each other—would be a challenge in Saudi Arabia at any time of the year.

No dates

Strict Islamic religious rules banning men and women associate until they are married—and marriages are usually arranged by their families.

There is no taking a girlfriend out to a coffee shop or restaurant: the rules and restrictions all have separate sections, one for single men and the other for women and families.

But the Muslims...which go by the official name of the Commission for the Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice—are only a measure, not a stage of power, said a shoemaker in front of his shop on Wednesday.

His Valentine's assortment are mixed colors...red, blue, green etc,— so that he doesn't attract unfair attention.

"Sales are still good," he said, not wanting to be identified to be on the safe side. AFP

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

OPINION

Saving the terraces

IN TOURIST POSTCARDS, THE MAGNIFICENT BEAUty of the Banaue Rice Terraces is frozen in time to stunning unbelievability. But the truth is that the terraces, which are included in the Unesco World Heritage List, are fragile and vulnerable. Migration, the lure of easy tourist money and a plague of plant matter-eating leaftoid the 2,000-year-old structures that follow the contours of the Cordilleras. In fact, the flooded terraced paddies that claims nearly 100,000 hectares a year have since 2000 been on the "endangered list" of the UNO World Heritage sites.

EDITORIAL

Efforts to saving the terraces may have received a big boost when the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) announced that they have been identified as one of six pilot areas worldwide for its Globally Important Agricultural Heritage (GIAH) systems project, which aims to implement policies and programs that will recognize indigenous agricultural practices all over the world while contributing to food security and keeping intact native farming communities together. According to Parviz Koohafkan, FAO-GIAH global coordinator, the rice terraces made it to the GIAH priority list after being picked from among more than 200 indigenous systems worldwide that share very close similarities with the Filipino in agricultural diversity and indigenous farming knowledge.

The project is notable because it addresses the two basic requirements for the terraces to survive: agricultural technology and cultural reinforcement. Some parts of the terraces are falling into ruin because the remaining walls have been gnawed away by free-long reinforcement. Farmers are also giving up due to deforestation as watersheds above the farms. Some local craftsmen cut down trees to get the roots for carving images of Ifugao gods. Technological assistance will ensure that the terraces survive from environmental challenges.

But the main fundamental problem is cultural. The younger generations of Ifugaos are moving to the cities and abandoning the terraces. Their parents, eager to give them a higher quality of life and the amenities of modern living, send them to schools where they learn lessons that are only remotely concerned to agriculture and the terraces. Thus, they don't go back to the terraces to farm, and the terraces fall into disrepair.

Similar rice-growing mountain terraces in China have long disappeared. But the Philippine terraces aren't relics; they continue to throb with life and color. In fact, while the Philippine terraces are on the Unesco danger list, Unesco and heritage experts expect them to be removed soon because of conservation measures adopted by the Ifugao provincial government and Save the Terraces Movement. It is hoped that the FAO announcement will hasten the rehabilitation of the terraces. The irrigation problem is particularly acute, and FAO support is needed to address it immediately.

But the optimistic development should not make Ifugao and other Philippine authorities relax. It is important that the agrarian culture of the Ifugaos be maintained.

For centuries, the terraces' traditional practices—ritual, religious, environmental, agricultural, hydrological and artistic—have revolved around the rice-growing cycle, supporting the life of their inhabitants. Massive emigration shows that the traditional lifestyle has become extremely difficult to maintain today, leading to an endless search for solutions that will update the tough Cordillera lifestyle while maintaining cultural roots.

Among the solutions being studied is to have abandoned terraces leased to other farmers or to local governments, which should then devise ways to make these mountain farms productive. Some Ifugao farmers are practicing a system of leasing untilled lands called *uhot*. Usually the owner will let his farm be tilled by another farmer for free for three years. On the fourth year, the owner will get half of the harvest, provided that he will also share in whatever agricultural inputs or labor cost needed. Perhaps a more systematic way of what could be devised so as to foster further the farming culture of the Cordilleras.

In the end, what should be preserved is a lifestyle harsh with adjustments to the modern age. The terraces cannot be saved by economic ideas, which would conserve and preserve the terraces for the dollars of tourists. But recognition can only go so far. What's needed is for the agrarian roots of the terraces to be maintained. And that means preserving its culture and lifestyle, and fostering its fidelity to the earth.

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The unloved

PUBLIC LIVES

Antonio Contreras

AMONG THE MANY PRESIDENTS WE HAVE had, Ramon Magsaysay is consistently singled out as the most loved. For a long time, Ferdinand Marcos held the dubious distinction of being the most despised. Magsaysay continues to be remembered as the most beloved of all our presidents, but Marcos has been dislodged from his ignoble perch by Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo. Marcos was despised and hated, yet he had many admirers. GMA now commands every president's or ex-Kapit of public contempt. The public sentiment about her is not just one of disapproval. It is one of wasteful rejection. No other president in recent memory has been so ordered.

Yet, her politicos still don't get it. They treat the problem as if it were nothing more than the reversible outcome of a bad pun. And so, led by cash-rich Pagco, they have bought expensive time on television to advertise the President's concern for the poor. They have painted the charitable words "GMA cares" on bridges, on the roadsides of buildings funded by pork barrel, on billboards along public roads, in front of parks, parks, and public buildings. They have converted the government-run Channel 4 into a huge electronic billboard that hysterically flashes the message "GMA cares" in all its programs. Also, none of these seems to have created any positive effect on 2010 presidency ratings.

And so, in desperation, at the start of the new year, Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita, assisted by outgoing Press Secretary Jesus Dureza and Philippine Information Agency director-general Cheloy Garafil, launched a campaign to sell the virtues of our government agencies to give them a lecture on "presidential branding." I gave them the lessons (1/24/09) report of Jerry E. Esplanada: "Citing the low approval ratings of President Macapagal-Arroyo, the Palace has directed government agencies to attribute all their projects to her."

Ermita's bill will not activate GMA. I would most imagine the landscape they want to create. A school building is constructed, and, Joseph Estrada, refusing that they be carried from the hall? Then come was the same—she thought they were laughing at her.)

How dare they? was the theme of her discourse. They were only squatters, after all, because they have no homeowners agreement like the lousy Development Bank has. Bolinao has no immunity from what?). They are not exempt from the laws of the land (what laws did Bolinao break?). The city must respect.

Santiago also played the rich-versus-poor card, saying the United Nations system was located in favor of the rich. It wonder what this had to do with the World Bank's rules on credit-dividends, but that would change because Santiago was going to change the system. Her answer was cryptic: she also called the WB "the two monkeys." (As in, how dare Bolinao submit her brilliant legal memorandum to professors WB lawyers? One wonders who she expected him to send his memo.)

Finally, at intervals speech, Santiago's opening remarks eventually on the issue, not only by other senators, but by the resource persons as well. What followed was an open invasion by World Bank bashing, including the charge that it didn't even know how to conduct a fair investigation. Bolinao was the last guy. Compared to him, Hitler terrors—and everyone else, including the contender Eduardo de Lima, as well as Gimbadanan Gutierrez—confided like roses and were treated with indulgence.

Surreal.

That's not all. Gutierrez, getting on the bandwagon early, played the role of the long-suffering, more oblivious, have she lamented, she got the WB report in November 2007, but it was only sure, single-spaced pages, and it was already confidential, and she was never supplied with any names or any leads by the WB. But she had been her duty.

Gutierrez was excused with compunction. No one, but no one, asked her the obvious questions. Did she ask the WB for additional information and material? If so, what?

Most questions, self-regally dealt, were time-consuming answers (since hearings was on such a tight schedule). So there are her questions. Anyone who has bothered to look at the WB website would know that "The Bank is, of course, willing to provide assistance with national investigations upon request, including [subject to some restrictions], sharing the evidence underlying the Bank's findings. The Bolinao Report is therefore, an offer to begin a cooperative relationship between the Bank and the investigative agency, if the investigative agency so desires." (Emphasis supplied.) Evidently, the correct letter to the report that she received must have contained similar assurances.

Did Gutierrez request? Did she act on them? If not, and intellectual, dishonesty in the list of Gutierrez's shortcomings.

If the senators failed to ask Gutierrez that key question, neither did any of them ask De Lima the equally obvious and key question: What is the total value of government-related projects that the bid for competition were awarded?

Why is it key? Because the senators will undoubtedly have successful bit to at bagging government infrastructure contracts. At least we have a hypothesis.

After all, De Lima, who may have the dubious distinction of being the only commerce in the world whose double-debunked (permanent-) from building on a WB-financed project. Her company is debarred, and he personally is debarred. Yet he owns his absolute economics of any wrongdoing that the WB has attributed him with.

So I said, normal. Happy Valentine's Day, anyway.

Surreal

GET REAL

Solita Collas-Monsod

THAT'S THE ONLY WORD I CAN THINK OF TO describe the Senate hearings I watched from my stylized (more accurately, my sofabed) a couple of days ago. And what I saw made me feel even worse.

First, there was Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago, who, probably as a result of having retired not on two shots joint positions—chief justice of the Supreme Court and member of the International Court of Justice—is venting her ire at everyone by insisting on conducting the proceedings as she sees proceedings over a judicial hearing rather than a legislative one. I have it on good authority that the only similarity between the two that witnesses are permitted to testify and answer questions. Otherwise, they have different goals, and the standards of proof are up for a court have an application in committee proceedings. In no other case that I looked at, if the legislature chooses to rely on hearsay evidence, the choice rests with it).

In any event, she appeared to be in her element, hearing about the kinds of evidence that were acceptable or not acceptable to her "court," setting time limits for the witness (which she exceeded, anyways), figuratively whipping her male colleagues into line. That part was hugely entertaining, and I enjoyed watching them behaving themselves, particularly after they saw how she slapped down Sen. Rodolfo Biazon, whose only fault was to signal an answer from office Hernan Inocencio Gutierrez to her question.

What was not the least bit amusing was the diatribe she launched against the World Bank and the Philippine government's chief whipping boy (whose name she couldn't even remember correctly—she kept on referring to him as "Bart"). They apparently committed a "crime" that is unforgivable in her eyes: that of less-superior thinking. Apparently declined to provide her with WB-confidential documents requested by the Ombudsman

Polling in Israel and Palestine

SOCIAL CLIMATE

Mahar Mangahas

IN ANY ELECTION, HERE OR ABROAD, THOSE I would like to see win are not some candidates in particular, but the system in general. An election outcome should reflect the true will of the electorate. It's a pleasure to see opinion polls succeed in predicting an election, since it proves there are credible data.

I say this because only when pollsters are trusted as legitimate, like the one last November in the United States, but also when they don't see a clear winner, as in the July-9 parliamentary election in Israel.

"Tight contest is gridlock," said The New York Times on Feb. 11, as the centrist Kadima party of Tzipi Livni won 28 seats, the right-of-center Likud party of Benyamin Netanyahu won 27 seats, the Labor party of Ehud Barak won 13 seats, and the far-right Yisrael Beiteinu (Israel Our Home) party of Avigdor Lieberman won 11 seats, with 99 percent of votes counted. The rest of the 120 seats in the Knesset were split among many other parties. Both Kadima and Likud claim that they can form a majority coalition.

As of press time, 13-29, three opinion polls just released unanimously at 28 seats, and Kadima at 25 to 26 seats (see the organ Haaretz' Global Monitor). Such figures were probably a statistical tie, and could be reversed by the 11 percent of votes that the party of Kadima gave Likud. The Times doesn't mention any grumbling that the opinion polls were wrong in the Israel election.

Polling in Israel. Opinion polling is important for democratic societies not only during elections, but at all times. In particular, since 1994 the Tami Steinmetz Center for Peace Research of Tel Aviv University has done a monthly War and Peace Index Survey, with some permanent questions on the peace process, and new questions on contemporary issues. Its last survey had 545 interviewees representing the adult population of Israel (error margin 4.1 percent), over Jan. 4-6, 2009, a week and a half after the planned invasion of the Gaza Strip (Operation Cast Lead).

Among the findings: The operation was supported by 94 percent of Israel Jews (three-fourths of the Israeli population), but was opposed by 65 percent of Israel Arabs. On whether the military activity in Gaza should cease if Hamas is prepared to stop firing on the southern communities in return for opening the crossings, 80 percent of Israel Jews said No, but 69 percent of Israel Arabs said Yes.

Most Israel Jews said that Israel should not sign a ceasefire agreement with Hamas if it does not include the freeing of Gilad Shalit; but four of every five Israel Arabs said that Israel should sign it even if Shalit would not be freed. (Shalit is an Israeli soldier, now 22 years old, who was abducted in a Palestinian raid across the Gaza border in 2006, and is still being held by Hamas, despite an Israeli offer in exchange hundreds of Palestinian prisoners for him.)

Polls like this help Israel's leaders to understand their people. Help the Israeli people to understand themselves, and help non-Israelis like Palestinians, Egyptians, Lebanese, Syrians, Americans, Russians, Chinese, and even Filipinos, to understand Israel.

Polling in Palestine. In 1996, the largest Palestinian think tank, the Center for Opinion Polls and Survey Studies at An-Najah National University, has done 37 surveys over the years, by poll of July 1-2, 2009 had a sample of 661 persons in the West Bank and 500 persons in the Gaza Strip, of whom 98 percent responded (error margin 3 percent). Some findings:

Only some percent said that the Israeli aggression on the Gaza Strip was not a reaction to the firing of rockets from the Strip. Fifty-seven percent said they supported military operations by Palestinian resistance factions after marking a truce agreement.

Fifty-eight percent thought that the war on Gaza strengthened Hamas in the West Bank. Six in ten persons considered the new US administration under Obama is not serious in its endeavors to achieve peace in the Middle East.

Another organization, the Palestinian Center for Public Opinion, Dr. Ibrl. Sabour, a mainly Christian area, near Bethlehem), polled 427 adults of the West Bank and Gaza Strip on Jan. 25-31. Some findings:

In a web version the worst was in the Gaza Strip. Sixty-seven unobtrusively, 30 percent said human, 10 percent said he said, and 3 percent said Bush.

On whether, when their children reach their age, they would be peace between Israel and Palestine, the simple size of the quarterly Social Climate Inquirer is too small to scientifically distinguish the Muslim-Filipino community.

Surveys of the views of the Muslims are sadly missing from the peace process in Southern Philippines. It is to their best interest to have negotiate polling done by Muslim-owned universities, as in the Muslim institute, Cooperation depends on hard data, not on beautiful buildings.

* * *

Contact SWS: www.sws.org.ph or mahar.mangahas@sws.org.ph.

Soul mates

YEARS BEFORE I HAD MY FIRST SERIOUS RELATIONSHIP at the age of 27, I saw my soulmate in a dream. He came about the same age as I was, and looked very like. The only thing that told me who he was was the feeling I recalled when I woke up and the happiness that lingered the whole day. Dreamt as it may sound (and I was unashamedly a reader romantic back then), I accepted it was magical. The experience made me hopeful.

I wanted to tell my best friends and mom and sister about, but didn't. At that age you could dream of anyone, including Brad Pitt, and proclaim him to your soul mate.

In keeping magic I kept it to myself. I loved believing My Soul Mate would happen. I daydreamed about him and imagined his face for days. I even thought about handwriting I want to sleep to induce another dream.

But soon another boy came and sort of knocked him out of my head. I know he was The Other Boy because I felt something other than what My Soul Mate left me. The Other Boy courted me throughout high school, and we became an item after graduation. Our relationship was not perfect, but it was for so large while he had no reason to blindly, our long-distance relationship lasted a measly seven months. By that time, I had completely forgotten about My Soul Mate.

When I entered college, love took a back seat partly because I was still healing after my breakup with The Other Boy, but mostly because I did not go out on dates. I disliked dates; I find the ritual phony, awkward, and even horrifying. I cannot imagine myself being stuck with someone I barely know. Group dates? Not a chance. Even if I live in a dorm without curfew. Thursday nights (the regular prelit night on campus) find me sleeping in my bed or reading a book. And I go home every Friday night.

Soon, I realized that I was pulling up more walls than I had intended. I am not a man-hater or a closet lesbian, but I can hold my insides whose when I am talking to some strange guy. In college, you get to meet a lot of people whether you like it or not. My natural self-heroes, deep down in my heart, that if they keep up until I am 40, I would reach relatively a generic dentist.

My mom and relatives, however, praise me to high heaven for being single and "focused." In some crazy movements, I feel proud about this, but usually find it weird.

I have my share of suitors, but none of them has made me fall in love with him. No one has been persistent, sexy, persevering enough.

I think about this as I contemplate my last semester. The dilemma of a non-romantic college life and eventually becoming an old maid was not the movie I scripted back when I was a kid. Of course, I tell myself I am too young to worry about marriage, but I have been in a relationship before by a fiery academic had missing other things, so it is easy to forget. But my values are non-known better.

One night, after almost five years, My Soul Mate paid me another visit. It was during the sleepy month of August when, in dreamland, I saw My Soul Mate looking up at me behind a large white table in an unfamiliar classroom. In real life, I did not recognize him, but when I woke up I realized My Soul Mate looked different from when I first saw him. It was as if he, too, had aged.

I recalled the vision that morning, sounded my disbelief in MS Word, and then went on with life. I was no longer the sophomore kid who mooned over non-urges in her dreams.

I thought about it from time to time, but I never saw him again. A friend told me she had seen him in a dream, I asked her if she knew the person, and if the same dream had come to her before. She wasn't sure who he was, but it was the first time she had dreamed about her soulmate.

Later, I am drawn to the solitude of my dorm room sometimes playing the soundtrack of a spirit visiting me twice. I was touched by the offer, if there was any, but I could no longer question his existence. I was more concerned over why he looked sad, and how I looked to him in that dream.

I may have grown cynical over the years, but I still occasionally a bizarrely logical whenever "real" pops up one day. When I have to do it, I will not be afraid to take the plunge.

I cannot pledge to go from "frantic single, not available" to "flirtatious single, up for grabs" immediately, even if everyone is telling me some obvious solutions, including Google. Open "soul mates" and you'll get some dating sites on the first page). Perhaps I haven't fallen the romantic as one yet who believes in the power of saying or speaking by what you want. The Other Boy's still a bit of discovering for me to do, to shaking of myself and why I am interested or like I am scared of men. Or why God sent roses instead of the real thing.

Out of these days, when I become the person I am intended for. My prediction: I will be happy with my life and love. But I hope that it happens in this lifetime, and that we will both know it was worth the wait.

Anne Lieser, 23, is a BS Biology senior at the University of the Philippines, Los Baños.

YOUNG BLOOD

Anne Lieser

We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the (never) something and before — Ed.

NOTICE TO YOUNGBLOOD CONTRIBUTORS:

Send your contributions by e-mail to youngblood@inquirer.com.ph together with your address, age and the school you're in and your parent's consent to it, if employed, the position you're holding and the company you work with. Give references to Youngblood should not have been previously published.

Poor quality textbooks have no place in our schools

COMMENTARY

Juan Miguel Luz

POOR QUALITY TEXTBOOKS IN OUR PUBLIC schools are a cause of concern because: (1) textbooks with old-style, poor grammar and illogical pedagogy contribute to poor learning; (2) poor textbooks in the schools for many years, and the enormous sums we will only reimburse poor learning over time; and (3) textbooks are often the main source of factual information for teachers. The ones with factual errors and poor grammar only serve to engrave poor teaching.

As the new Inquirer Go Negosyo put out, poor textbooks have no place in our schools. Go, a well-styled crusader against bad textbooks—may be considered a guilty but guiltless have a role to play in democratic societies such as ours.

The demand for quality textbooks is every bit as great as ever. In a government monopoly under the Textbook Board (overseen by Juan the International Materials Council between 1960 and 1986), Textbook World Bank was in the mid 1970s, THE/IBRD's largest borrowing country for textbooks for public schools. While this produced textbooks of good quality, this monopoly—like all monopolies—became prone to corruption.

Textbook procurement was later "privatized" as the hope of spurring growth in the local industry. Supposedly, the country's first textbook publishing industry was born.

In 1994, the DepEd went too far in decentralizing textbook procurement to schools and divisions. Every administration could now directly order textbooks from local publishers, and every publisher could directly interact with a "ban by" monopoly market.

Two problems quickly arose: School administrators neither had the time nor expertise to distinguish between good and poorly written textbooks. Meanwhile, now "free to do their thing," flooded the market with book titles, many of which were simply "cut and paste" jobs. To gain competitive advantage, publishers began to offer "inducements" to school administrators.

When corruption became the overriding factor in textbook procurement decisions, quality suffers, resulting in multiple ills—many of the below quality—for the same subject in most grades in some schools.

In 2003, the DepEd reconstituted textbook procurement to restore a standards-based content evaluation that could weed out poor ones. As also to eliminate the problem of unused textbooks in schools due to multiple titles.

Centralized procurement has both its efficiencies, but this does not guarantee quality, again because of the risk inherent to monopolies (and schools and districts may become "captive" markets for public schools. While this produced textbooks of good quality

RP's boundless promise

IF YOU DON'T THINK THAT THE PHILIPPINES is in a terrible situation and that matters will become worse if we don't do anything different, then you don't have to read on.

However, if you share my assessment that our country is in a very bad shape, then bear with me and think about the solution I am proposing.

I won't bother mentioning our major problems because I don't want to engender even more despair. The feeling that a problem is insurmountable can lead to a dangerous consequence: hopeless paralysis, the exact opposite of what I intend to accomplish.

We need nothing less than a revolution. The operating political system that governs our country is irredeemably corrupted. Historically, mass purges have been the only effective way of achieving national catharsis. But there is a way for this process to occur without violence.

In 1986, we had a unique opportunity to break free from our centuries-old traditions and mores when the entire government was essentially replaced, from the president on down to the mayors and barangay captains. Officers in charge were appointed and were given a chance to prove themselves before a general election would hold a year later.

The opportunity was unique not because of the new cast of political characters but because it was a chance for all of us to look at public service in a vastly different perspective. Public service is a sacrifice made by fellow citizens who prepare for the responsibility by becoming financially independent and thoroughly informed about the serious issues of the time. Public service is not a means of livelihood. Public service, being a sacrifice, should be borne by as many citizens as possible like in ancient Athens where the practice of family members serving in government was considered an extraordinary opportunity for public administration.

We need to elect a president in 2010 who will lead a peaceful revolution. In 2013, the president will call for synchronized local and national elections with all elective positions open (House, the 24 Senators sent to the bicameral mess). Each candidate will pledge to serve only one term and spouses, parents and children will be prohibited from succeeding any candidate. Since many dynasties exist primarily to protect vested family interests, there will be a one-time opportunity to break up all substantial dynasties that pass the 2013 elections and the start of the campaign period in 2016.

This president must have an unblemished record of integrity and honesty. This president needs to be completely nonmedicinal, and he/she must be a person of great intelligence and perceived to a person of great intelligence. This president should embody the national ideals of a one servant-leader who will use humans to sacrifice for the common good.

Will this resolution solve all our problems? Certainly not, but it will be a decisive step toward the redemption of the boundless promise of our nation.

—MARTIN BAUTISTA, MD
Bagaobayan Pasay

Youth will have their time and make a difference

THIS IS IN REACTION TO THE JAN. 27 EDITORial titled "Youth and change." I completely agree that we, the Filipino youth, should make a move in bring about change in the country.

It's true that the American youth made a big impact during the US presidential elections and greatly helped to ensure Barack Obama's victory. But we just can't compare the American youth to the Filipino youth, mainly because there are more Filipino youth than American youth who are living below the poverty line. And because of this, the Filipino youth are more susceptible to the lure of money.

It's already a given that there are always politicians who will resort to unscrupulous acts, but we can't stop poor Filipino families and young voters from selling their votes. For them, money is everything in their daily struggle for survival. This is the big difference between the Filipino youth and the American youth.

With this in mind, I believe that, one day, the Filipino youth, will be able to make a difference in our elections by using the law to position of power and authority.

—KRIZIA LAURENTE,
kurtis_laurente@yahoo.com

PDIC protecting depositors

THIS REFERS TO THE EDITORIAL "Was the payoff begun?" (Inquirer, 2/11/09).

Is the Inquirer aware that the Philippine Deposit Insurance Corp. (PDIC) was created to "provide permanent and continuing deposit insurance coverage to the depositing public"? Inherent in this mandate is the protection of small, unsophisticated depositors who put their hard-earned savings in banks. PDIC's policy and practice, as our records will bear out, have always been to start paying out deposit insurance claims as soon as possible, in order to provide immediate relief especially to the small depositors. While undertaking this, it is also our duty to ensure that only valid deposit claims are paid to the rightful owners.

It is for these reasons that PDIC started on Feb. 13, 2009 receiving the claims of the small depositors of the closed banks affiliated with the Legacy Group of Companies. We have initially identified these depositors as: for those who maintain regular savings accounts of P500,000 and below; those who maintain time deposits of 1 percent of the total deposit accounts totaling P1.1 billion in the 12 Legacy-affiliated closed banks. Withholding the payment of these accounts will hurt the small depositors.

We have been able to start the payout despite the fact that the assets of Legacy Group Assets Corp. (LGAC) by engaging the services of Ramon Sotto of 19 Filipinos accredited external auditor, KPMG Manabat Sanagustin & Co. to ensure transparency in segregating these accounts from those deemed questionable or suspected to be fraudulent or fictitious.

Our payout operations, which began Feb. 13, will therefore, involve only validated and clean claims. We have set aside questionable or doubtful deposit claims for further verification. These will be subjected to more stringent validation and examination, based on standard PDIC procedures for this type of accounts. Deposit accounts that are proven to be fictitious or fraudulent will not be paid.

We would therefore like to assure the public that we will uphold our duty to exercise utmost diligence in ascertaining that only those with valid deposit insurance claims will be paid.

As the editorial rightfully pointed out the Deposit Insurance Fund (DIF) is a public fund and all expenditures are therefore subject to the scrutiny of the Commission on Audit and other government audit and accounting rules and regulations.

It is unfortunate that my relationship with Speaker Prospero Nograles, whose name has been linked to Legacy, has cast doubt on the integrity of the PDIC to perform its mandated duties. I wish to assure everybody that the PDIC is composed of professional men and women of integrity who also will nothing else but to bring the perpetrators of this scam to justice.

—MIGUEL C. MAGSALIN, president,
Philippine Deposit Insurance Corp. (PDIC)

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Writers of letters to the editor are requested to indicate their complete address and telephone or pager number or e-mail address for verification purposes. The Inquirer will not publish any letter unless such information is supplied.

Love walked in at Jollibee

When Audrey a Purchasing Assistant, first met Vince, an Engineer, at a Singles for Christ Ministry in Daly area, California in late 2005, little did the two know that they are destined for each other.

Audrey, a 21-year old Filipina back in 2004, found solace in the ministry as she badly missed family and friends from the Philippines. But it was in a Jollibee store in California where she said, she found home.

"When I got here in the Bay area, California, I was so surprised when I found out that Jollibee was just a couple of exits away from where I live. It was like home to me. Every time I feel so homesick, I just drive to Jollibee to feel like I am home again," she said.

Soon as Audrey and Vince began hanging out, the Filipina would always bring the California boy to her favorite hang-out, the Jollibee Union City Branch for a quick breakfast, snack or lunch.

"Vince did not really grow up eating the kind of food served at Jollibee and it was me who got or influenced him to eat here. It became one of our pig-out spots and a hang-out spot for when we go out with our church friends," Audrey recalled.

In the morning of February 5, 2008, while eating their favorite breakfast, Jollibee's Longganisa and Tapa at the Jollibee branch in Union City California, the two officially became a pair.

Two years later, the two got engaged. And on their wedding day last December 5, 2008, Audrey and Vance did not let the opportunity pass them by, without having fun photos taken at the happy brightly-colored place that stood witness to their love.

Audrey's bridesmaids used Chickenjoy buckets to hold their bouquet of flowers, while their official photographer Jojo Tamerlo captured their love and joy in the different spots inside the store.

"So why did we do the photoshoot at Jollibee? Because it witnessed how our relationship has grown. It witnessed our good times and bad times. It's where I heard our laughter, stories and secrets, and it nourished our Filipino way of life," Audrey said.

For Mr and Mrs Vance Villanueva, this sweet and simple tradition of visiting Jollibee in the Bay Area will surely continue now that they are looking forward to their life together and building a happy family.

Audrey and Vance share a sweet kiss at a Jollibee counter

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MESSAGES

Despite the challenges in our economy brought about by the global financial crisis, health care remains a primary concern for all Filipinos. These challenges affect our health and productivity of our people. It is, therefore, heartening that you, as the Philippine Health Insurance Corporation (PhilHealth), have continued to secure the health of our people through your various programs and services.

In my administration's continued call for overall attendance, PhilHealth has played a crucial role in keeping our citizenry healthy by providing them with health coverage and in making them aware of the importance of this initial program.

Over the years, I have witnessed how our poor kababayans have accumulated bills because their health care services are made fully accessible to them through PhilHealth. Where before they could not go to hospitals for medical care, today they can seek adequate medical care and attention because PhilHealth is there as their reliable partner.

Today, as PhilHealth celebrates its 14th year, I call on this new and earnest of this relatively young corporation under the leadership of Dr. Eloj C. Aquino to focus their energies and resources towards achieving universal PhilHealth coverage for all Filipinos. The journey towards fulfilling this mandate may not always be rewarding, but I am confident that you can deliver as expected. I reaffirm my full support to PhilHealth's effort to bring health insurance to the farthest regions of the country and to empower every Filipino regardless of his status in life.

Congratulations!

Gloria Macapagal Arroyo
President
Republic of the Philippines

As the world copes with various challenges, such as climate change, emerging diseases, and new discoveries in the field of medicine, the Philippine health sector continues to implement reforms in health care delivery to ensure that medical services are made available even in the remotest parts of the country and at the level of quality that every Filipino deserves.

In our continuing desire to push health reforms, the PhilHealth has been actively complementing our initiatives through the health care financing component of Yes-more Day. By partnering with hospitals and doctors have contributed to the improvement in the quality of health care delivery. Our partnership with them is also an in the capability-building efforts of institutional health care providers. Today, we have more PhilHealth-accredited rural health units and outpatient facilities through which members can avail themselves of diagnostic and other services.

As PhilHealth turns 14, I expect Team PhilHealth to continue working hand-in-hand to universal coverage. Let not the challenges of financial crisis or of organizational them weaning in way with developments, particularly in health technology.

Rest assured that, as your Board Chairman, I will continue to support initiatives that will redound to the benefit of the 87 million strong members that trusted our poor flexibility, especially in these economically difficult times.

Congratulations and Indefatigable Saluting Mabuhay!

Francisco T. Duque III, M.D., MPH
Secretary of Health

Today is a momentous day for us as we mark cluster to our common goal of providing social health insurance coverage to all Filipinos. It will be an exciting and challenging 2009 for us. Team PhilHealth, for we have huge debt-in-our shoulders to perform universal coverage which mandated by 87, canceled of the entire RP population, by 2010.

Our theme for 2009 – we can make many activities during the hope of expanding some more the membership coverage as well as the responsiveness of the benefits that we provide our members with. We shall find ways to engage, common goal: this year until we achieve our commitment to give our fellowmen peace of mind, especially center health care is connected.

Our theme, "Kalusugan ng Lahat, PhilHealth ang Katapat" articulates our commitment to provide health insurance cover for our fellowmen. Through the different membership categories, we hope to sign up more members and provide each and every Filipino some with access to quality health care services. We will continue to explore new ways of extending such access to other underserved sectors of society and help make the dream of universal health insurance coverage a program that makes a significant difference in the lives of Filipinos.

As we celebrate 14 years of implementing the NHIP, we would like to thank our stakeholders – doctors, hospitals, media, the academe, our members, our local and foreign donors, the National and Local Governments, Congress, employers, among others – for the continuing trust they have given to us. Without their utmost support, it would be difficult for us to attain the goals we have set in implementing a national program as vital to people and as important as the NHIP.

Together, let us move as one team. Like sailing sandwich ang PhilHealth na may isigang sinusunuwaan, dinuka-dinuka-dinuka, pinakamabilog at pinakamasasarap pamangang ng ating kababayan.

Dr. Eloj C. Aquino
President and CEO

ANNIVERSARY ACTIVITIES

- February 2 – Wednesday 9:00 AM – Opening of Lantern Office Week – Life Balance Program
- February 7 – Anniversary Raffle of the Month Raffle – Texas and Raffle
- February 9 – 13 – Information Campaign (IEC) – Off-Site of Program – Set Regional – Set North (Cluster)
- February 9 – 11 – Team Week – Life Balance Program in Baguio City
- February 11 – Press Conference (Press Release) – Dr. Ramon Del Castillo Radio
- February 11 – Special Anniversary Episode of "Team PhilHealth" Radio 12:00 noon (Dec. 11:00 AM) to 1:00 PM
- February 12 – Employees' Day @ the LaTrinx
- February 12 – Press Conference (Press Release) – Dr. Ramon's Restaurant
- February 14 – Visit to Love @ PCSO Hall
- February 14 – Philippine Sunlight Lunar Story
- February 16-20 – Annual Week – Life Balance Program in Tagaytay City
- February 23-27 – Annual Week – Life Balance Program in Koronadal City
- March 6 – Radio Fest sa Kalinaw, Quirino Grandstand

Did you know that...

- The average value sent per month in 2008 is P3,074 for employed and P6,000 for self-employed?
- 46 percent of the total number of 2010 Board Registered nationwide are already accredited?
- Over 21,000 service nationwide are accredited, 51 percent of which are government?
- There are 11 PhilHealth Regional Offices, 80 Service Offices and 18 Service Units all over the country?
- Employers may now enroll their employees' contributions online through electronic platforms of three of the Philippine Islands, Citibank and Dumaguete?
- There are 61 accredited collecting banks with over 4,500 branches nationwide ready to accept PhilHealth premium payments?
- Contributions to the Universal Health Care Program is P2,400.00 per family?
- The number of Filipinos who availed of PhilHealth benefits is P20,000.00 per single period of confinement compared to only P11,000.00 in 2007?
- Pneumonia is the number one reason for admissions in PhilHealth members in 2008, with Philhealth paying P709 for 29,017 cases admitted?
- PhilHealth paid about P20.00 (from January to November 2008) for members' hospitalization benefits, 37 per cent of which were for drugs and medicines, 27 percent were for X-ray and laboratory exams and 24 percent were for professional fees of doctors and surgeons?
- A family spends P720.00 per month or P8,720 per day to have PhilHealth coverage and that free coverage already includes all qualified legal dependents of the principal member?

PhilHealth
Your Partner in Health

Kalusugan ng Lahat, PhilHealth ang Katapat

PhilHealth's 14th Anniversary

Closing In On Universal Health Insurance Coverage

1995. The year opened with a major breakthrough in the global economic arena when the World Trade Organization replaced the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trades, a development that economic analysts at that time perceived to be the gateway for more trading activities across all continents.

It was also during this year when Yahoo, Java programming and the DVD were formally launched into the global markets, and the same year when Federal won the ice hockey world championships and South Africa, the Rugby World Cup. In the field of medicine, workers from the National Institutes of Health announced the success of clinical trials using the first preventive treatment for sickle cell anemia. Indeed, a lot of things took place in 1995 that have helped shape what we now enjoy in this century.

Club schedules are also block legislation was passed, further expanding the government's efforts to provide an intangible yet very important social protection benefit for its fast-growing population.

Fast forward to 2005.

Fourteen years after Republic Act "RA" 7875, or the National Health Insurance Act of 1995 was passed, has PhilHealth proven its worth to the Filipino family? Let's take a quick look at some of the articles it has made.

As the government corporation tasked to provide all Filipinos with health insurance coverage, PhilHealth has posted significant achievements that redound to the benefit of its 49 million strong membership base. "To date, we have covered about 70 percent of the entire RP population, with the employed sector comprising the biggest chunk with 9.2 million active members," PhilHealth President and CEO Dr. Eloj B. Aquino said. "Total coverage of the low privileged sector of society follows closely at 24 percent or 3.26 million members, while our Individually Paying Program, which consists of self-earning professionals and daily wage earners, comprise about 10 percent or 2.72 million paying members."

Two other programs, namely, the Lifetime Member Program and the Overseas Workers Program, posted noteworthy membership figures as of mid-December, with one 31 percent and 32 percent, respectively. "We aim to further boost these figures with our aggressive marketing efforts, so we inch closer to our goal of universal coverage," the PhilHealth Chief said.

Aside from expanding its coverage, PhilHealth has also expanded the benefit packages that is available to members with. Just recently, it announced the coverage of the 4th Neonatal Spermatozoa Delivery in accredited facilities nationwide. The new package took effect January 1 this year, at a case rate of P9,500.00 inclusive of hospital and doctor's fees.

Further, PhilHealth also implemented the Outpatient Malaria Package worth P600.00 as part of the country's response to the global aim of combating malaria as called for in the Millennium Development Goals of the United Nations. The PhilHealth also introduced the Voluntary Surgical Contraception Package and the Tiered Payment of the Professional Fees of accredited physicians to ensure that the medical care services that they provide are of the highest quality that PhilHealth members deserve.

Just recently, the PhilHealth Board of Directors approved important amendments to benefit case procedures are classified and the corresponding relative value units of particular surgical procedures in light of rapid development in the field of medicine. These include the Amendments to the Relative Value Scale 2005 which was earlier based on the 1997 edition of the physician's current procedural terminologies (CPT) of the American Medical Association. After consideration and workshops with specialty societies, PhilHealth recognized that many procedures and services need to be unbundled in the list to correctly report them during claims reimbursement and revise some of the Relative Value Units (RVUs) attached to selected surgical procedures in the Scale.

In particular, fifteen procedures have been added, the RVU of about 69 procedures were decreased, and the RVU of about 1,042 procedures were increased.

The Board also approved the revised Case Type Classification to update the benefits by providing a more appropriate case type classification with corresponding ICD-10 codes. During the previous implementation of case type classification, cancer cases receiving chemotherapy and/or radiotherapy as well as chronic renal failure undergoing dialysis were previously classified as Case Type "A". These have been upgraded to Case Type "C".

"We continue to review our benefit packages to ensure that these remain truly relevant, especially in light of emerging and re-emerging diseases and other health treatments in the country," Aquino stressed.

Financially, PhilHealth is very stable and sound and it is ready to provide the health insurance cover that its members might need. Investments are growing steadily, and actuarial reserves are reaching levels that give Top Management peace of mind, knowing that the corporation can readily address the hospitalization needs of its members, anytime.

Internally, the organization has also undergone a re-engineering and the revitalized organization is even getting used to new internal branches and offices designed to enable it to better serve its members and stakeholders.

As far as awareness is concerned, about 90 percent of the entire RP population are already aware of PhilHealth, up from only about 70 percent two years ago. The organization is working harder towards sustaining this awareness level to usher in member empowerment, especially where benefits availment and membership responsibilities are concerned.

As it pushes 15, PhilHealth takes on calculated steps to make sure that it delivers on its promise of universal coverage when 2010 comes. Just as Dr. Bernard S. Harris Jr. and Michael Foale took their careful steps to become the first African-American and Briton, respectively, to walk in space in February 1995, PhilHealth is also forward to making history next year when it fulfills its mandate of providing at least 46 percent of the growing Filipino population with the health insurance protection that they all deserve.

14 Wishes For PhilHealth...and What They Say About the NHIP

Continue to upheld the service and upheld medical service. Activity capacity and medical service.

Hon. Juan Ponce Enrile
Senate President

Hindrance sa ni nato ang implementasyon ng PhilHealth para maayos natin yung mga operation at yung mga sick at maitulong. Kailangan ng mga magkakaroon ka ako ng mahusay na client ka dito at service sa health and medical services kayo magkakaroon kaming dito sa ospital kung mga member.

Hon. Edgardo J. Angara
Senator

"Napakaraming salamat po sa aming mga kababayan. Marami sila na kumukuha ng ating mga serbisyo... maraming salamat talaga dyan sa inyo Mahal na Lahat."

Rep. Herminio "Bingbong" Teves
1st District, Tarlac City

"Magpursi napakaganda ng PhilHealth ang mga member ng mga pagbibigay ng kapwa."

Rep. Arnulfo Bagabaldo
1st District, Bataan

Maraming slao sa PhilHealth dahil sa kanilang mga ng isang pinakamalaking pakinabayan na pagbibigay sa atting mga kababayan."

Hon. Alfredo S. Lim
Mayor, City of Manila

Republic Act 7875 cannot be modified as it contains concepts that brought affordable insurance health care model and a better quality on the more affordable in Filipinos. To put it plainly, PhilHealth has done much to respond to its mandate to the indigent and marginalized sectors of society.

Despite being separate and distinct institutions, the NHIP and PhilHealth are one in addressing the need for social security and health insurance for all Filipinos especially the poor and the vulnerable sectors."

Romulo L. Neri
President, Social Security System

"PhilHealth as an emerging corporation, we do as we plan on keeping Filipino-majority and in keeping. Hallmark ever it keep at service as any government keeping of Filipino as maintaining as ng PhilHealth... solid and stable as value being taken as a public keeping professionals ng PhilHealth insurance."

Hon. Raymundo Belmonte
Member, PhilHealth Board

"Since its creation in 1995, PhilHealth has extended the much needed medical assistance to Filipino nationwide. confident has advanced over the period in effective and efficient delivery of health care to the poor and other members as well as to our overseas contract workers. May our continue to carry out mission of providing better and responsive health programs to our kababayan."

Hilda B. Pilar
President, Confederation of Filipinos

"PhilHealth continues to service the health care needs of Filipinos in the country and abroad. Partnership with Philippine National Bank are our capacity on saving would lend hands and their facilities as we are committed to provide 70% of our net income to the World Bay 3 initiatives. By banking with us, you help provide free medicines and medical services to the needy."

Reynaldo A. Bellosillo
President and CEO, Philippine National Bank

Kapagsisi namin sabihing nanin sa pag-alok ng mga

Kapahalan sa kanyang mga sa pagbigay ng mgaing ating mga kababayan na nangangailangan ng tulong. Ang PhilHealth ay isang mahalagang institusyon na nagbibigay ng mga

Jay Ann Kuntz
Miss Earth-Air

"Napakaganda ng kanilang mga napakalaking pagtulong sa mga ating kababayan."

Jose Lamangan
Cultural Director
Philippine Employees Association of Philippines (PEAP)

"Hindi dapat ang mga ng ating mga kababayan ang mahihirapang kapag may sa kanila, sakit, ang mga kapamilyan. Ito ang mga ng mga sa ating kababayan – ang mga sa mahihirap na hindi ang mga kapamilyan ng ating mga."

Zony Manzano
Hospital, NLEDAP

"Malaking bagay po sa amin ng mga kababayan ang mga mahihirapang kapag may sa kanila, sakit, ang mga kapamilyan. Ito ang mga ng mga sa ating kababayan – ang mga sa mahihirap na hindi ang mga kapamilyan ng ating mga."

Susan Enriquez
Philippine Red Cross – Makati

"Napakaraming po sa ni nagsisilbi sa ating mga nakakapag kapag may sa kanila, sakit, ang mga kapamilyan. Ito ang mga ng mga sa ating kababayan – ang mga sa mahihirap na hindi ang mga kapamilyan ng ating mga."

Rosario Bautista
Philippine Red Cross – Makati

Across the NATION
Assistant Editor Tony Bergonia

'Bising' strands 1,600 passengers in Cebu

By Jhannice Napallacan and Joey A. Gabieta
Inquirer Visayas

CEBU CITY—OVER 1,600 PASSENGERS WERE stranded in the different ports of Cebu since Thursday evening after the Cebu Coast Guard barred the sailing of all types of vessels to areas covered by Storm Signal Number 1 because of tropical depression "Bising."

Petty Officer 2 Mario Rosallo Madrigal of the Cebu Coast Guard said that they banned from sailing 33 motor launches, fast crafts and barges, most of them bound for Bohol and Leyte.

Madrigal said most of the passengers stayed at the passenger terminal, some opting to board the vessels and others going home.

The Philippine Atmospheric Geophysical and Astronomical Service Administration (Pagasa) said "Bising" was sighted 30 kilometers northeast of Tacloban City as of 10 a.m. Friday.

"Bising" has maximum winds of 45 kilometers per hour (kph) and was moving west northwest at 7 kph as of 10 a.m.

Pagasa placed under Signal No. 1 several areas, including Eastern and Western Samar, Biliran, Leyte provinces, Northern Cebu, Bohol, Dinagat Island, Siargao Island, Surigao del Norte, Surigao del Sur and Agusan del Norte.

The weather bureau said "Bising" would be at 50 kilometers east southeast of Cebu on Saturday morning and 40 kilometers east of Surigao City on Sunday morning.

The different local disaster coordinating councils in Cebu had convened to prepare for the possible effects of the tropical depression.

Some towns in Cebu have been affected by Basilisk-like winds due to a low pressure area that caused the heavy downpour.

In Tacloban City, the Office of Civil Defense (OCD) in Eastern Visayas has urged all provincial officials to activate their respective provincial disaster coordinating councils (PDCC).

OCD-8 chief operations officer Rey Gason said on Thursday that the PDCCs could help inform residents in areas affected by the tropical depression what could be done to reduce the impact of the depression in their areas.

Classes in the elementary and secondary levels in the region were suspended yesterday.

The OCD-8 has put to motion a report on stranded passengers, he said.

Gason also urged fishermen using small fishing boats to avoid going out to sea.

Sumilao farmers begin pilgrimage for CARP extension

MALAYBALAY CITY—ABOUT 40 SUMILAO farmers began their pilgrimage on Thursday to push for the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program Extension with Reforms (Carper).

Two farmers from Emmas del Sur joined them in the pilgrimage.

The activity, dubbed "Lupang Hinirang, Lupang Hinahong: A farmers' pilgrim for Carper," aims to promote congress to pass the Carper before June 30.

The Sumilao farmers and other farmer groups will have a caravan from Bukidnon to the Visayas. Depending to be joined by other farmer groups, they will start with their walk in Congress from Bicol.

Almost 600 farmers from Negros arrived in Manila on Monday. They will walk for the arrival of the farmer pilgrim from the Mindanao provinces in the country.

Hilda Sumabat, 39, had been one of the Sumilao farmers who started their land struggle through a hunger strike in 1996. She joined the "Walk for Land, Walk for Justice" campaign in 2007 where they hiked about 1,700 kilometers from Bukidnon to Manila. Now, she is again pushing for Carper.

"I still never get tired of fighting to legally own our land," Sumabat told the Inquirer.

The Sumilao farmers are still struggling to get hold of the certificate of land ownership awards (CLOAs) to legally own the land they are now tilling.

"What we have is only the memorandum of Agreement and not the CLOAs which will be our proof as the rightful owners of the land we are tilling and where our houses are standing," Sumabat said.

Bishop Honesto Pacana of the Diocese of Malaybalay, who joined the Sumilao farmers' send-off ritual, said that Joint Resolution No. 39, which effectively cancels the distribution of the portions of new lands not to be covered by CARP, should be scrapped. —Grace Castel-Albasin, Inquirer Mindanao

IRIGA FESTIVAL
Participants give their best in their street presentation at the 'Tinagba Festival' in Iriga City. Camarines Sur.

Mikey asked to clear name in alleged PNP meddling

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—Rep. Juan Miguel Arroyo will have to clear himself after reports linked him to alleged meddling in the appointment of the provincial police director, Gov. Eddie Panlilio said on Friday.

Panlilio said provincial reports link Arroyo to efforts in ranking Senior Supt. Keith Singian one hapon in his post or in ousting the pullout of some elections in which the National Police Commission endorsed three police officers as Singian's replacement.

Panlilio issued the challenge to Arroyo after Interior Secretary Ronaldo Puno also Napoleon Bonaparte the withdrawal of Resolution 2009-018 during their conversation on Thursday after the Ating Kasi awarding ceremonies in Malacañang.

Puno, he said, told him that he (Puno) had withdrawn the resolution after the Napoleon decided not to recommend a Bagumbayan for the post.

Panlilio said he asked Puno not to endorse Senior Supt. Gil Lubio Jr., who the Pampanga Mayors League suggested to Comelec liaison police director Chief Supt. Leon Nilo de la Cruz through a resolution on Feb. 2.

Lubio, an Ilonggo, is a classmate of Singian in the Philippine Military Academy Class of 1983.

Panlilio said his access to the police informed him that Singian extended his stay through the intervention of Arroyo, the eldest son of President Macapagal-Arroyo.

Arroyo, however, denied interceding in Singian's case, saying the issue was a local police matter.

"I'm the chair of the House committee on energy. Intervening in police matters is not my mandate," he told the Inquirer. Rosette Adel, Inquirer Central Luzon

Hanjin's new rule: Obey safety rules or get fired

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—THE HANJIN Heavy Industries and Construction (HHIC) Philippines Inc. has imposed a policy of "outright termination" for workers found in her violating safety rules in its shipyard in Subic, Zambales, where, by its own count, 19 workers had died since February 2007.

Jeong Sop Shin, HHIC-Philippines president, announced the strict implementation of safety rules through a memorandum dated Feb. 6.

The memorandum covers all employees or workers of subcontractors at Hanjin shipyard. It included workers employed by subcontractors hired by HHIC, the company's construction arm, to build the second dry dock.

HHIC Philippines, the general contractor in the $1.3-billion project, has 17 subcontractors, all of them Korean, that employ 11,750 workers, as September 2008 report from the Department of Labor and Employment showed.

The report also showed that from January 15 to December 2008, according to the HHIC Philippines' 2008 report on annual work accidents and illness expensive.

HHIC, on the other hand, has hired 84 subcontractors. At least 49 of these are Koreans, 32 are Filipinos and three are Malaysians, German and British. They employed 1,825 workers as of Dec. 31, 2008.

The Shipbuilding and Construction Workers Association (SCWA) on Friday said the shipyard workers have reached Shin's memorandum.

They have criticized it, however, especially a provision that does not provide them a warning or suspension by violations. "It does not accord due process to workers," said Noel Mesa, SCWA vice president for operations.

Noel Bulalino suffered burns on his legs and arms on Dec. 12. He received a termination order on Thursday for alleged improper use of oxygen. He was the victim per he is being terminated," he Mesa said. Rosette Adel, Inquirer Central Luzon

Residents illegally evicted, say priests

NAGA CITY—A NAGA PRIEST IN Camarines, Camarines Sur, and his assistant priest have accused the provincial government of "harassing" and illegally evicting residents of Pinugo Island and Sitio Hinayonhayonan in Binanuang Pandacan.

Fr Joaquin Camaro, parish priest of Our Lady of Peace and Good Voyage in Barangay Calabia, and his parochial vicar, Fr Delfin Baron Jr., said on Feb. 4, the team of a certain Eduard Boncayawan of about 20 men carrying M16 rifles, shotguns and a samurai sword and 20 members with hammers, stones and crowbars began demolishing the houses.

The demolition team tore down six houses which displaced six families in the two settlements, Camaro said.

The priest said the demolition team refused to identify themselves to the residents and even to barangay officials.

"To these too much force and arrogance is tantamount to harassment," said Camaro.

"We appeal to the provincial government to respect the rights of the people, and make proper coordination" with municipal officials, Camaro said.

He said that in the minutes of a joint meeting on Feb. 4 of the Camarines Sur council, the provincial government and the Protected Area Management Board, it was clarified that "Pinugo Island" is a disposable land and does not fall within the proposed protected area.

"We have been living here since 1931 and we have papers to prove that Pinugo Island is not part of the protected area," Pandacan barangay captain Dante Pachecho said.

In an interview over 98.9 DWNX radio in Naga City, Camarines Sur Gov. Luis Raymund Villafuerte said the affected residents are informal settlers and that notices of eviction were served as early as two years ago.

There were no armed men during the demolition and the men were carrying office were provincial employees guarding the area, subject to installations of a making TV crews would be filmed, he added. Jonas Cebilles Soltes, Inquirer Southern Luzon

INQUIRER Visayas

Edna Jan Bandayrel
Bureau Chief Edralyn L. Benedicto

Glimpses of Cebu heritage in short stops

WEAVING is one of the old industries in Argao. Bolinaoyans witness how coconuts weave their fibers.

JAY MORAGUDA

By Theo Rimas
Contributor

BALIKBAYANS* MIGHT HAVE come to Cebu last month for the Sinulog Festival, but they would also like to explore and experience more of Cebu.

So, after the Sinulog celebration was over, they hopped into big air-conditioned tourist buses to join the three-day Sunny Sugbo Southern Heritage Trail, a three-day tour of 22 southern towns on Jan. 21-23.

Centuries-old baroque churches built during the Spanish era are the key attractions, which show that there is more to appreciate in the province than just white, sandy beaches.

The caravan drove down the scenic coastal route where fishermen, watch towers, resorters and other sights gave visitors glimpses of a rich historical and cultural heritage that enhances the scenic charm and warmth of the countryside.

For Filipinos who are now based in the United States and Canada, the homecoming was a way to escape the bitter winter cold that has reached subzero temperatures.

"This is our first time to join Sunny Sugbo. We like it because we don't only see different places in Cebu but we also get to socialize. We're also here to escape the very cold winter," said Sally and Rosalinda Otero, who both hail from Libon, Cebu, and are now based in Canada.

Over 300 balikbayans and tourists joined the tour, which was borne out of a partnership between the Cebu Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCCI) and the provincial government led by Gov. Gwendolyn Garcia in 2005 that aimed to promote and spur tourism in the countryside.

Old churches

Layout wise, 40-kilometers southeast of Cebu City, has become a popular destination because of its Spanish-colonial houses and the St. Catherine of Alexandria Parish Church, which was built in 1860 by the Augustinians.

The church has Graeco-Roman features with Moorish influence because of the talisman-shaped domes that top its belfries and the massive arch of its façade resembling a Middle Eastern mosque.

The town is also known for its shoe industry and chicharon (pork rind).

The San Miguel Archangel Parish Church, a mexico-baroque structure built by the Augustinians in 1773 in Argao town, 66 km southeast of the city features many treasures dating back to the mid-19th century such as murals on the ceilings showing biblical scenes done by famous Visayan artists Catanto Avila and Raymundo Fernandez.

Established by the Spaniards as a pueblo in 1608, Argao also has a plaza origin designed by 16th-century Mexican artists and one of the remaining house organs in the country.

Built in 1990, the Argao Museum houses the remaining priceless antiques of the church and family heirlooms, religious artifacts and icons, many of which were exported from Spain. The collections are classified into gold, silver and metal.

Old and elaborate vestments worn by Spanish friars and handwritten musical notes used during the Spanish period are also found in the museum.

Badian, 135 km south of Cebu, has a scenic coastline which one foreign investor described as comparable to the Cote d'Azur in southern France.

Fortress

It also has the Church of Patrocinio de Maria, the oldest remaining stone church in Cebu and considered one of the last remaining fortress churches in the country (the first built by the Augustinians in 1599).

Lindsay Bonnaire, the town's tourism coordinator, explained that the original church in the mountains was moved to the seashore to guard the town and its neighbors, like Oslob and Santander, against Muslim raids. A fortress and watchtowers guarded the church plaza, reportedly since Cebu was already a town (1565-1602), Bonnaire said.

In 1999, the church was reorganized by the National Historical Institute as a national historical landmark because of its distinct Filipino baroque style. In July 2003, the National Museum also declared Badian's Church of Patrocinio de Maria a national cultural treasure.

Another attraction, the Bojilone Parish Museum, which was opened in 2008, features rare collections of religious icons, artifacts, vestments, furniture carvings and other church treasures.

Also putting up its own museum is the St. Francis Xavier Parish Church in Alegria town. Its priest is actively involving the community to showcase its own religious artifacts.

In Oslob, 117 km southeast of Cebu City, the ancient stone church, the Immaculate Conception Parish, was gutted by fire in March last year and is now undergoing restoration. The image of the Blessed Virgin Mary is the only true that survived the disaster.

Mayor Ronald Guanzon said P30 million was still needed to restore the church.

Army barracks

The Coastal, built towards the end of the Spanish colonial era by engineer-architect El Moreno Cano Bahnsdal who built several churches in Bohol, is a stone's throw away from the church. It was later the remains of the belfry and was meant to serve as a barracks for Spanish soldiers.

Dr. Tess Gaerlan-Bayhon, who has been based in Washington for over 40 years, is amazed that the Sunny Sugbo was a "good introduction to the rural communities."

Greeting the governor for pursuing the endeavor, Bayhon said "She introduced us to the nooks and corners of rural Cebu. You've been to Paris, Prague and other great cities, but you've never been to the towns of Cebu."

On the last day of the excursion, the tourists visited the Mother Mary Statue in Simala, Sibonga town, that is run by Marian monks. The image of the Blessed Virgin Mary is said to be miraculous, drawing thousands of devotees who offer their petitions.

"The Sunny Sunny is meant to be short trips in each town for visitors to have a glimpse. So, if they decide to return to the place, they know what to expect," said Provincial Board Member Peter Calderon of Cebu's second district, which covers some of the towns included in the tour.

The activity also increased awareness among local officials and the townspeople of the tourism potential of their place and learn how to meet standards required by tourists, Calderon said.

He added that the Sunny Sunny so high he was an opportunity for local government units to develop their own products and packaging as well.

The other towns and city visited in the Southern Heritage Trail were Minglanilla, Naga, Dumanjug, Boods, Moalboal, Malabuyoc, Ronda, Samboan, Santander, Alcoy, Dalaguete, San Fernando and Talisay City.

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NEWS

Japan gives ultimatum to deport Filipino family

TOKYO—JAPAN ON FRIDAY ordered the parents of a 13-year-old Filipina to prepare to leave within two weeks, giving them a choice to leave their daughter behind or face deportation.

It is a case closely followed by human rights activists. Noriko Calderon—who was born in Japan in 1995—has publicly appealed to authorities to let her family stay together.

Her parents entered Japan in the early 1990s with illegal passports and stayed in the country undetected until two years ago when her conduct was arrested but later released.

Noriko has grown up speaking only Japanese and attending local schools. Japan, which imposes tight controls on immigration, is likely to allow her to stay to complete her studies.

"I have decided not to grant a special residential permit to the entire family," Justice Minister Eisuke Mori, who oversees immigration, told reporters.

Friday was the deadline for the family's temporary residential status.

Hiroyo Watanabe, a leading human rights lawyer handling the case, said the immigration bureau told the parents to decide by Feb. 27 on the date to fly to the Philippines.

"We accept neither the deportation of the whole family nor sending back only the parents," said Watanabe, who asserted that the immigration authority could detain Noriko's 16-year-old father if he refused to leave.

The parents have refused to leave without their daughter but ran out of legal options when the Supreme Court in September last year rejected their appeal to stay in Japan.

"She is 13 years old," father Ailan Cruz Calderon told reporters. "She cannot survive or protect herself alone."

Lawyer Watanabe said he would keep negotiating with the immigration authority to let the family stay at least until the girl graduates from middle or high school.

An estimated 300 families were in the same situation as the Calderons, said Watanabe. AFP

NORIKO CALDERON looks wary on the a Japanese in yesterday's press conference. Her father, Ailan Cruz, is at right.

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Editor Abelardo S. Libanan

MMDA crew removing one of the trees on Katipunan Avenue. (Contributed photo)

MMDA told: Stop cutting trees

DENR chief issues cease-and-desist order, MMDA execs baffled

By Allison W. Lopez

FOR ALLEGEDLY FAILING TO secure a permit from them, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) yesterday issued a cease-and-desist order against the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) on the removal of 25 trees along Katipunan Avenue in Quezon City.

DENR Secretary Lito Atienza said an investigation by his agency showed that MMDA did not coordinate with them when they began hauling trees on Wednesday as part of a road-widening project.

"I am deeply bothered by the report of tree cutting. As a government office, the MMDA should have complied with environmental laws before embarking on such activities that have impact on the environment," he said.

The MMDA has denied cutting any of the trees, but the DENR claimed that some had been cut from the area and transplanted without corresponding permit from the DENR-National Capital Region.

Atienza said the MMDA violated Section 3 of Presidential Decree No. 953 dated "Requiring the planting of trees in certain places and penalizing unauthorized cutting, destruction, damaging and injuring certain

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Man uploads sex video of ex-GF online; is nabbed

By Nancy C. Carvajal

A FORMER CALL CENTER agent has been arrested in Quezon City for allegedly uploading to the Internet a sex video of his former girlfriend.

The suspect, who police identified as Nonoy Gacusan, 22, was nabbed on Thursday with the help of the victim in an entrapment operation on Lico Road.

The video showed his girlfriend and a man having sexual intercourse and passed it on to all the girl's relatives using the victim's e-mail address, a police investigator said.

Chief Investigator PO2 Maribel Veronica said Gacusan would be charged with violations of Republic Act 9262 or the Anti-Violence against Women and Children Act.

Based on the victim's statement to the police, the scandalous footage could have been taken on Jan. 15, 2009, in one of their "night-out" where the claimed she passed out and woke up inside a hotel room.

The victim also said that she and Gacusan had been living in for the past three months in the house of the suspect's cybersex in Antipolo City, but broke up on Jan. 25.

The 22-year-old single mother added that at the height of their argument, the suspect did not agree to a break-up and instead threatened her that he would spread a video footage where they were in bed.

"I ignored his threat because I never knew we've been filmed, but when I checked my mother's e-mail two days after, I saw the horrible video," she said.

She further said the suspect who knew her password to her e-mail used it to spread the scandalous video online.

The suspect, police said, denied uploading and sending out the footage.

"He said he loves her, why would he sendsomeone her dear why," police quoted the suspect as saying.

World Bank now a villain instead of hero

SO WHAT IF THE SENATE, hearing on the World Bank's report of a cartel that cornered public works projects was a "non-issue"?

What's the House of Representatives' parallel investigation into the World Bank report also a dunn?

Even before the hearing last Thursday, people already knew what the outcome of the Senate probe would be.

The World Bank, the source of the report of collusive practices in the awarding of project works projects, was on trial in the Senate last Thursday.

For helping the government not only in its economic recovery program but also in moral uplift, the World Bank has become a villain instead of a hero.

It's like a family friend telling the wife about her husband's philandering and ending up losing the friendship of both the husband and wife.

But the World Bank is not the loser here, but the Filipino people because the Bank is a big source of funds for our economic recovery program.

* * *

Why should the Senate favor the World Bank to produce evidence of its report of corruption in the awarding of public works projects?

That's not the job of the World Bank, that's the job of government agencies like the Office of the Ombudsman and the Presidential Anti-Graft Commission.

But the latter investigative bodies can't operate precisely because the President's husband is implicated.

The Ombudsman, Merceditas Gutierrez, particularly, cannot go against Mike Arroyo, her chieftain at the Supreme Law School who crossed the bar together with her.

On Target

Ramon Tulfo

Republic of the Philippines
Supreme Court
Manila

BM No. 2012

PROPOSED RULE ON MANDATORY LEGAL AID SERVICE FOR PRACTICING LAWYERS

RESOLUTION

Acting on the Memorandum dated January 27, 2009 of Justice Renato C. Corona re: Comment of the Integrated Bar of the Philippines on our Resolution dated 13 January 2009 in the Proposed Rule of Mandatory Legal Aid Service for Practicing Lawyers, the Court Resolved to **APPROVE** the same.

This Resolution shall take effect on July 1, 2009 following publication of the said Rule and its implementing regulations in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

February 10, 2009.

REYNATO S. PUNO
Chief Justice

LEONARDO A. QUISUMBING
Associate Justice

CONSUELO YNARES-SANTIAGO
Associate Justice

ANTONIO T. CARPIO
Associate Justice

MA. ALICIA B. AUSTRIA-MARTINEZ
Associate Justice

RENATO C. CORONA
Associate Justice

CONCHITA CARPIO MORALES
Associate Justice

ADOLFO S. AZCUNA
Associate Justice

DANTE O. TINGA
Associate Justice

MINITA V. CHICO-NAZARIO
Associate Justice

PRESBITERO J. VELASCO, JR.
Associate Justice

ANTONIO EDUARDO B. NACHURA
Associate Justice

TERESITA J. LEONARDO-DE CASTRO
Associate Justice

ARTURO D. BRION
Associate Justice

DIOSDADO M. PERALTA
Associate Justice

RULE ON MANDATORY LEGAL AID SERVICE

SECTION 1. Title. – This Rule shall be known as "The Rule on Mandatory Legal Aid Service."

SECTION 2. Purpose. – This Rule seeks to enhance the duty of lawyers in society as agents of social change and in the courts as officers thereof by helping improve access to justice by the less privileged members of society and expedite the resolution of cases involving them. Mandatory free legal service by members of the Bar and the Roll of Attorneys hereof will aid the efficient and effective administration of justice especially in cases involving indigent and pauper litigants.

SECTION 3. Scope. – This Rule shall govern the mandatory requirement for practicing lawyers to render free legal aid services in all cases (whether, civil, criminal or administrative) involving indigent and pauper litigants where the assistance of a lawyer is needed. It shall also govern the duty of other members of the legal profession to support the legal aid program of the Integrated Bar of the Philippines.

SECTION 4. Definition of Terms. – For purposes of this Rule:

(a) Practicing lawyers are members of the Philippine Bar who appear for and in behalf of parties in courts of law and quasi-judicial agencies, including but not limited to the National Labor Relations Commission, National Conciliation and Mediation Board, Department of Labor and Employment Regional Offices, Department of Agrarian Reform Adjudication Board and National Commission for Indigenous Peoples. The term "practicing lawyers" shall exclude:

(i) Government employees and incumbent elective officials not allowed by law to practice;

(ii) Lawyers who by law are not allowed to appear in court;

(iii) Supervising lawyers of students enrolled in law student practice in duly accredited legal clinics of law schools and lawyers of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and peoples' organizations (POs) like the Free Legal Assistance Group who by the nature of their work already render free legal aid to indigent and pauper litigants and

(iv) Lawyers not covered under subparagraphs (i) to (ii) including those who are employed in the private sector but do not appear for and in behalf of parties in courts of law and quasi-judicial agencies.

(b) Indigent and pauper litigants are those defined under Rule 141, Section 19 of the Rules of Court and Aligos v. The Local Government Unit of the City of Naga (G.R. No. 130133, 26 October 2000, 508 SCRA 81).

(c) Legal aid cases are those actions, disputes, and controversies that are criminal, civil and administrative in nature in whatever stage wherein indigent and pauper litigants need legal representation.

(d) Free legal aid services refer to appearance in court or quasi-judicial body for and in behalf of an indigent or pauper litigant and the preparation of pleadings or motions. It shall also cover assistance by a practicing lawyer to indigent or poor litigants in court-annexed mediation and in other modes of alternative dispute resolution (ADR). Services rendered when a practicing lawyer is appointed counsel de oficio shall also be considered as free legal aid services and credited as compliance under this Rule;

(e) Integrated Bar of the Philippines (IBP) is the official national organization of lawyers in the country;

(f) National Committee on Legal Aid (NCLA) is the committee of the IBP which is specifically tasked with handling legal aid cases;

(g) Committee on Bar Discipline (CBD) is the committee of the IBP which is specifically tasked with disciplining members of the Bar;

(h) IBP Chapters are those chapters of the Integrated Bar of the Philippines located in the different geographical areas of the country as defined in Rule 139-A and;

(i) Clerk of Court is the Clerk of Court of the court where the practicing lawyer rendered free legal aid services. In the case of quasi-judicial bodies, it refers to an officer holding an equivalent or similar position.

The term shall also include an officer holding a similar position in agencies exercising quasi-judicial functions, or a responsible officer of an accredited PO or NGO, or an accredited mediator who conducted the court-annexed mediation proceeding.

SECTION 5. Requirements. –

(a) Every practicing lawyer is required to render a minimum of sixty (60) hours of free legal aid services to indigent litigants in a year. Sixty (60) hours shall be spread within a period of twelve (12) months, with a minimum of five (5) hours of free legal aid services each month. However, where it is necessary for the practicing lawyer to render legal aid service for more than five (5) hours in one month, the excess hours may be credited to the said lawyer for the succeeding periods.

For this purpose, a practicing lawyer shall coordinate with the Clerk of Court for cases where he may render free legal aid service. He may also coordinate with the IBP Legal Aid Chairperson of the IBP Chapter to inquire about cases where he may render free legal aid service. In this connection, the IBP Legal Aid Chairperson of the IBP Chapter shall regularly and actively coordinate with the Clerk of Court.

The practicing lawyer shall report compliance with the requirement within ten (10) days of the last month of each quarter of the year.

(b) A practicing lawyer shall be required to secure and obtain a certificate from the Clerk of Court attesting to the number of hours spent rendering free legal aid services in a case. The certificate shall contain the following information:

(i) The case or cases where the legal aid service was rendered, the party or parties in the said case(s) for whom the service was rendered, the docket number of the said case(s) and the date(s) the service was rendered;

(ii) The number of hours actually spent attending a hearing or conducting trial on a particular case in the court or quasi-judicial body;

(iii) The number of hours actually spent attending mediation, conciliation or any other mode of ADR on a particular case;

(iv) A motion (except a motion for extension of time to file a pleading or for postponement of hearing or conference) or pleading filed on a particular case shall be considered as one (1) hour of service.

The Clerk of Court shall issue the certificate in triplicate, one (1) copy to be retained by the practicing lawyer, one (1) copy to be retained by the Clerk of Court and one (1) copy to be attached to the lawyer's compliance report.

(c) Said compliance report shall be submitted to the Legal Aid Chairperson of the IBP Chapter within the court's jurisdiction. The Legal Aid Chairperson shall then be tasked with immediately verifying the contents of the certificate with the issuing Clerk of Court by comparing the copy of the certificate attached to the compliance report with the copy retained by the Clerk of Court.

(d) The IBP Chapter shall, after verification, issue a compliance certificate to the concerned lawyer. The IBP Chapter shall also keep a file of compliance reports in the IBP's NCLA for recording and documentation. The submission shall be made within forty-five (45) days after the mandatory submission of compliance reports by the practicing lawyers.

(e) Practicing lawyers shall indicate in all pleadings filed before the courts or quasi-judicial bodies the number and date of issue of their certificate of compliance for the immediately preceding compliance period. Failure to disclose the required information would cause the dismissal of the case and the expunction of the pleadings from the records.

(f) Before the end of a particular year, lawyers covered by the category under Section 4(a)(i) and (ii), shall fill up a form prepared by the NCLA which states that, during that year, they have served as supervising lawyers in a legal clinic or actively participated in the NGO's or PO's free legal aid activities. The certification shall be submitted to the IBP Chapter or IBP National Office.

(g) Before the end of a particular year, lawyers covered by this category under Section 4(a)(iii) shall secure a certification from the director of the legal clinic or of the concerned NGO or PO to the effect that, during that year, they have served as supervising lawyers in a legal clinic or actively participated in the NGO's or PO's free legal aid activities. The certification shall be submitted to the IBP Chapter or IBP National Office.

(h) Before the end of a particular year, lawyers covered by the category under Section 4(a)(iv) shall fill up a form prepared by the NCLA which states that, during that year, they are neither practicing lawyers not covered by Section 4(a)(i) to (iii). The form shall be sworn to and submitted to the IBP Chapter or IBP National Office together with the payment of an annual contribution of Four Thousand Pesos (₱4,000) by way of support for the efforts of practicing lawyers who render mandatory free legal aid services. Said contribution shall accrue to a special fund of the IBP for the support of its legal aid program.

(i) Failure to pay the annual contribution shall subject the lawyer to a penalty of Two Thousand Pesos (₱2,000) for that year which amount shall also accrue to the special fund for the legal aid program of the IBP.

SECTION 6. NCLA. –

(a) The NCLA shall coordinate with the various legal aid committees of the IBP local chapters for the proper handling and processing of legal aid cases where practicing lawyers can represent.

(b) The NCLA shall monitor the activities of the Chapter of the Legal Aid Office with respect to the coordination with Clerks of Court on legal aid cases and the collation of certificates submitted by practicing lawyers.

(c) The NCLA shall act as the national repository of records in compliance with this Rule.

(d) The NCLA shall prepare the following forms: certificate to be issued by the Clerk of Court and forms mentioned in Section 5(e) and (g).

(e) The NCLA shall hold in trust, manage and utilize the contributions and penalties that will be paid by lawyers pursuant to this Rule to effectively carry out the provisions of this Rule. For this purpose, it shall annually submit an accounting to the IBP Board of Governors. The accounting shall be included by the IBP in its report to the Supreme Court in connection with its request for the release of the subsidy for its legal aid program.

SECTION 7. Penalties. –

(a) At the end of every calendar year, any practicing lawyer who fails to meet the minimum prescribed (60 hours of legal aid) service each year shall be required by the IBP through the NCLA, to explain why he was unable to render the minimum prescribed number of hours. If no explanation has been given or if the NCLA finds the explanation unsatisfactory, the NCLA shall make a report and recommend to the IBP Board of Governors that the erring lawyer be declared a member of the IBP who is not in good standing. Upon approval of the NCLA's recommendation, the IBP Board of Governors shall declare the erring lawyer as a member not in good standing. Notice thereof shall be furnished the erring lawyer and the IBP Chapter which submitted the lawyer's compliance report or the IBP Chapter where the lawyer is registered, in case he did not submit a compliance report. The notice to the lawyer shall include a directive to pay Four Thousand Pesos (₱4,000) penalty which shall accrue to the special fund for the legal aid program of the IBP.

(b) The "not in good standing" declaration shall be effective for a period of three (3) months from the receipt of the erring lawyer of the notice from the IBP Board of Governors. During the said period, the lawyer cannot appear in court or any quasi-judicial body as counsel. Provided, however, that the "not in good standing" status shall subsist even after the lapse of the three-month period until and unless the penalty shall have been paid.

(c) Any lawyer who fails to comply with his duties under this Rule for at least three (3) consecutive years shall be the subject of disciplinary proceedings to be instituted motu proprio by the CBD. The said proceedings shall afford the erring lawyer due process in accordance with the rules of the CBD and Rule 139-B of the Rules of Court. If found administratively liable, the penalty of suspension in the practice of law for one (1) year shall be imposed upon him.

(d) Any lawyer who falsifies a certificate or any form required to be submitted under this Rule or any contents thereof shall be administratively charged with falsification and dishonesty and shall be subject to disciplinary action by the CBD. This is without prejudice to the filing of criminal charges against the lawyer.

(e) The falsification of a certificate or any contents thereof by any Clerk of Court or by any Chairperson of the Legal Aid Committee of the IBP local chapter where the case is pending or by the head of the legal office or responsible officer of an NGO or PO shall be a ground for an administrative case against the said Clerk of Court or Chairperson. This is without prejudice to the filing of the criminal and administrative charges against the malfeasor.

SECTION 8. Credit for Mandatory Continuing Legal Education (MCLE). – A lawyer who renders mandatory legal aid service for the required number of hours in a year for the three year-period covered by a compliance period under the Rules on MCLE shall be credited the following: two (2) credit units for legal ethics, two (2) credit units for trial and pretrial skills, two (2) credit units for alternative dispute resolution, four (4) credit units for legal writing and oral advocacy, four (4) credit units for substantive and procedural laws and jurisprudence and six (6) credit units for such subjects as may be prescribed by the MCLE Committee under Section 3(g), Rule 2 of the Rules on MCLE.

A lawyer who renders mandatory legal aid service for the required number of hours in a year for at least two consecutive years within the three-year period covered by a compliance period under the Rules on MCLE shall be credited the following: one (1) credit unit for legal ethics, one (1) credit unit for trial and pretrial skills, one (1) credit unit for alternative dispute resolution, two (2) credit units for legal writing and oral advocacy, two (2) credit units for substantive and procedural laws and jurisprudence and three (3) credit units for such subjects as may be prescribed by the MCLE Committee under Section 3(g), Rule 2 of the Rules on MCLE.

SECTION 9. Implementing Rules. – The IBP through the NCLA, is hereby given authority to recommend implementing regulations in determining who are "practicing lawyers," what constitute "legal aid cases" and what administrative procedures and financial safeguards which may be necessary and proper in the implementation of this rule may be prescribed. It shall coordinate with the various local chapters in the drafting of the proposed implementing regulations and, upon approval by the IBP Board of Governors, the said implementing regulations shall be transmitted to the Supreme Court for final approval.

SECTION 10. Effectivity. – This Rule and its implementing rules shall take effect on July 1, 2009 after they have been published in two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

The WORLD

Julie Lorraine B. Rivera

49 killed in fiery New York plane crash

NEW YORK—A COMMUTER JET CRASHED INTO a house in New York state on Thursday unleashing a fireball and killing all 48 passengers and crew and one person on the ground, officials said.

A series of explosions rocked the disaster and flames rather than nearby homes lit up the night sky as scores of firefighters tackled the disaster.

Firefighters from a nearby fire station were quickly at the scene, but despite what one local official called "heroic" efforts, were unable to get to the passengers and crew trapped in the inferno.

The Continental Airlines flight—number Flight 8 Q400 jet route—from about five minutes before it was due to land at the Buffalo airport.

An traffic controllers desperately tried to make contact with the pilot as the plane, operated by Colgan Air for Continental, approached Buffalo.

One controller asks another plane to look for it, according to a conversation aired by local television station WGRZ. He then asks someone to contact police on the ground.

A plane in the vicinity tells him, "we do have a flash it that was over the mark that did not make the airport."

The Buffalo News newspaper reported 12 homes were evacuated due to the risk from the burning jet fuel. It was unclear home many homes were damaged.

Erie County Executive Chris Collins told CNN television the plane was carrying 5,000 pounds of jet fuel and ruined in two fireball on impact.

"The tail of the plane is sticking out of the ground," he said. "Obviously, it exploded upon impact. So there was a lot of fire initially.

"It landed—as it came down right next to the fire hall. So there were firemen on this scene within literally seconds of it going down.

"I can't say enough about what the firefighters did, rushing right in as you might expect they would—a very heroic effort. But there were no survivors."

One witness, who gave his name only as Tony, told a local television station that plane flew right over his car, "nose down."

"Left wing man slightly down, pitched sideways, if you will," he said. "It was on a three line demo."

David Lucz, who lives near the crash scene, told the Buffalo News he heard a huge explosion and seen flames up to 10 meters in the air.

"It sounded quite loud, and then the sound stopped," Lucz said. "Then one or two seconds later, there was a thunderous explosion. I thought something hit our house. It shook our whole house."

"There was the initial boom, and then these cannon shots ... these loud secondary explosions, and they went on for about 30 seconds."

A CONTINENTAL Airlines plane burns after it crashed into a house in Clarence Center, NY, on Feb. 12. AFP

The wreckage and near the house was destroyed.

"The house was already flattened. There was no house, just a pile of rubble and still burning," he said.

There was snow and sleet in the area at the time of the crash, which is not unusual for the area this time of year. AFP

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WORLD BRIEFS

Global economic crisis top threat to US–spy chief

WASHINGTON—The new director of national intelligence told Congress on Thursday that global economic turmoil and the instability it could ignite had outpaced his former as the most urgent threat facing the United States. The assessment underscored concern inside Barack Obama's intelligence agencies not only about the fallout from the economic crisis around the globe, but also about long-term harm to America's reputation. The crisis that began in American markets has already "increased questioning of [t] citizenship of the global economy," the intelligence chief, Dennis C. Blair, said. Blair's comments were particularly striking because they were delivered as part of a threat assessment to Congress that "key counterparts focused on issues like terrorism and nuclear proliferation. Blair singled out the economic downturn as "the primary near-term security concern" for the country, and he warned that if it continued to spread and deepen, it would contribute to unrest and imperil some governments. AFP

Another Obama Cabinet nominee withdraws

WASHINGTON—Gov. Judd Gregg of New Hampshire abruptly withdrew Thursday as the nominee to be commerce secretary, saying he had "irreconcilable conflicts" with President Barack Obama over the economic stimulus plan and a concern over what many fellow Republicans believe is the politicization of the 2010 census. The departure of Gregg is the latest setback to a White House that has struggled to fill several top positions and fulfill the president's pledge to build a bipartisan administration. He is the third prospective Cabinet secretary—the second at the Commerce Department—to remove his name from consideration. "I'm a fiscal conservative. As everybody knows, a fairly strong one," Gregg, a Republican, said at a news conference. "And it just became clear to me that it would be very difficult...day in and day out, to serve in this Cabinet or any Cabinet. It was my mistake, obviously, to say yes," he added. AFP

Pakistan backtracks on Mumbai

ISLAMABAD, PAKISTAN—Pakistan acknowledged for the first time on Thursday that parts of the Mumbai terrorist attacks were planned on its soil and said that six suspects were being held and awaiting presentation.

The admission amounted to a significant about-face for the Pakistani government, which has long denied that any terrorist attacks against India, its longtime enemy, have originated in Pakistan.

Officials said as recently as Monday they did not have enough evidence to link the Mumbai assault to Pakistan, and there have been signs of internationalization in Pakistan over crackdown on Lashkar-e-Taiba, the Pakistan-based militant group that India and the United States have demand responsible for the Nov. 26 attack on India's financial capital.

Pakistani officials did not explicitly name Lashkar the organizer of the assaults on Thursday, but they did single out as suspects ten people who are known to be connected to the group.

The formal acknowledgment of a Pakistani link came on the final day of a visit to the country by Richard C. Holbrooke, President Barack Obama's special envoy to the region, who raised the issue with top Pakistani government officials, according to an official familiar with the conversations.

Though Pakistani officials denied the accusations, many have linked to Holbrooke's visit, the Obama administration has made clear that lowering hostilities between India and Pakistan is a key part of a regional solution to the war in Afghanistan. NYT

Openness and Authenticity in a Digital World

DDB

Dimaali

Marketing is especially interesting this year for many businesses, professionals who are the face of new authentic marketing movements or digital connectivity, most categories have this effects their paying field.

Susan Dimaali, president of Tribal DDB in the Philippines talks about the DDB networks views on the subject.

Digital technology has allowed more direct interaction where not only between dealers/retailers and friends, but also between companies and their consumers. It has also given people the ability to quickly research and react to promotions that are presented to them by different brands. The interaction gives brands increased exposure, not necessarily on their terms.

Increased exposure can be daunting, the possibility of criticism, slander, and judgments can sometimes be perceived to ensure greater consistency in the quality of their products and services. The good news is that this is an opportunity to build stronger relationships for companies who are committed to their brands and values and customers.

Many successful brands in partnership with the DDB network have adopted to the new marketing landscape by applying alternative strategies. There's talk of "rewarding" where the consumer is connected as a new channel, who through the tidbits and opinions can influence the consumer landscape. Companies include this process through internet and mobile communications (user-generated content and product reviews are becoming more and more important considerations in making purchasing decisions.

Even social networking can be considered as a platform to influencing consumer behavior. Facebook and Friendster have created instant among millions of people worldwide, and have increased the power of word-of-mouth, which has always been recognized as the best medium of all, according to McDonald's marketing icon and founder of DDB.

Social networking reveals the importance people place on relationships. With internet and mobile technologies providing convenient channels for connecting, it is easy to see how customers and businesses have become valuable in today's world. In fact, a number of these sites proactively cover price and consumables. People have learned to be suspicious of some propositions because of hidden charges and product quality issues. As for unique selling propositions, the power of authenticity can be manifested through maintaining channels for feedback and response. For instance, companies may be actively communicated to consumers who, in the spirit of building lasting relationships, should be responsive and address issues to make. The same is true for suggestions from customers because companies are more easily maximized, which puts companies in a better position to respond and stay relevant.

In co-building consumer brand with its clients, DDB executive the importance of relating with consumers with openness and authenticity, not just through digital media but in as many avenues as available. As with any area of marketing, the important thing is to be consistent in one's point of view in every time and on every opportunity.

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SPORTS

WHAT'S INSIDE
Pucay fires 70, stays in touch with Malaysian leader /A24

Quek pips Aunzo in 6-hole playoff

Singaporean hotshot spoils local party

QUINCY Quek's impeccable grace under pressure carries him through.

By Marvey H. Castillo

CANLUBANG, LAGUNA—THE PARTY-CRASHER DID what he came out to do.

Quincy Quek, Singapore's young but seasoned internationalist, birdied the sixth playoff hole by holing sunlight putt to edge the WPPPhilippine EMC Invitational Amateur over a gutsy Buddy Aunzo.

The seven-swinging 21-year-old Quek sawed his best shot of the day on his fourth and final trip to the 18th green.

He lasped a 145-yard approach with a pitching wedge from the rough to within seven feet for the birdie that silenced a gallery that followed the marathon playoff.

"I'm feeling the adrenaline now," the disarmingly trendy Quek, the 2007 Future Cups individual champion, said.

"But I feel very nervous. I feel that hitting putters was the key, though I made a mistake [off the tee] by finding the [right fairway] rough."

That approach was nothing short of brilliant, as the Singaporean flew that wedge shot only past the flag and onto the ridge at the back of the small green, the ball rolling back and stopping seven feet from the hole.

Aunzo, on the other hand, left himself with an uphill 14-footer, also after a wedge shot from just over 133 yards. He gave his putt a good chance only for the attempt to graze the left lip of the hole.

Both Quek and Aunzo fired out with, save-under par 70s to forge the playoff at 287, with the Filipino not bridging his 1-6 and 17 to erase a two-stroke deficit on the final three holes of regulation and Quek dubbing a six-footer for birdie on the 18th.

"It was just not for me," the 28-year-old Aunzo, who will turn pro after the PAL Intercollegiate in Dumaguete City later this month, said in Filipino.

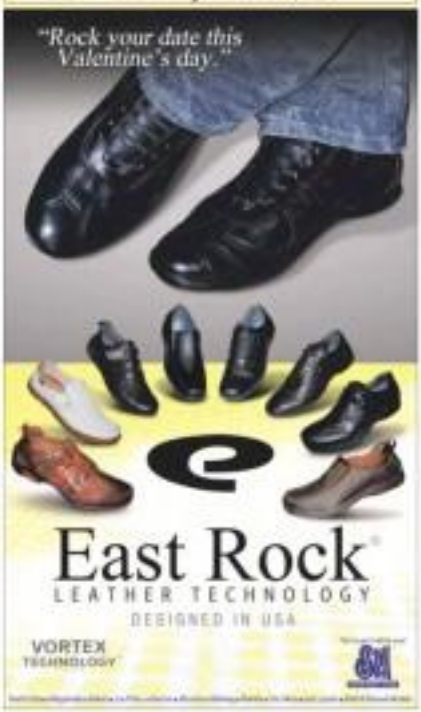
"I tried very hard, bit [Quek] was just the better player on that last hole."

The ending was perfect for what had been a hotly contested tournament, with Aunzo and Quek entering the final day just one shot shortof the Aussie Pig.

It also had all the drama, with both players getting chances—and making birdies— in the early holes of this playoff to end it early.

Aunzo's first solid chance came in the second trip to No. 10, where Quek, sawing out of the first cut of rough, badly judged his approach by landing the ball on the front fringe, at least 25 feet short.

(CONTINUED ON A24)



VILLAR

Billiards patron Villar gets PSA President's Award

By Ronina S. Acosta

LOCAL BILLIARDS SPRANG BACK TO ITS FEET last year, thanks to a sports hunter who launched a nationwide examination that also resulted in the discovery of several promising talents.

Along with 30000's biggest achievers led by three-time Athletes of the Year and Hall of Fame inductee Manny Pacquiao, the Philippine Sportswriters Association duo deemed it fitting to bestow on Sen. Manny Villar the Pres's Award during the San Miguel Corp.-PBA Annual Awards Night on Feb. 25.

The former Senate president, who will receive the honor at the dinner in homage of the Manila Overlay, launched the five-leg Villar Cup in May last year, aside from the main draw, it also held a search for future champions in the two billiards mini-tournaments.

Last year's winners were Warren Kiamco, Ronnel Gallego, Randy Valle, Anthony Gomez and Judelth Cruz.

Past recipients of the tournament's Award include Pacquiao, 2002 Asiad tennis bathalf team, Mr. Universe competitor Hector Glaviano, Lee Gracion and Sonny Gardoce, bowlers Lyn-Del Rosario, Lina Dumaliu and Cecilia Yap and rugs legend Alvin Patrimonio.

Add-Ons Pacquiao, other major members in the two-time duo hailed by the Philippine entertainment and Gaming Corp. are Nilo Aliang (vice), Arnulfo Weiler, Dorothy Delasin, Dodot Jamilla and Angel Cruz Spoff, Manny Jr. Ahead, Marnie Gonzalez (pro boxing), Kelly Williams (pro singing), Antonio Oreste Rodriguez and Jonathan Hernandez, Bases and Go Saitoy Sevenoaks).

Also on the list of awardees are young athletes Ruthenese Rivera and Alf Ramon Tiong Tanhapon awarded and the Amateur Federation of the Philippines (Shotcasting Mac).

Other recipients of the PSC-PSA Awards Night are the Villar Foundation, Senator Francis Escudero, Philippine Sports Commission, PSC, Shakey's, ACSAT, PBA, PBL, NCSAA, PCSO, SM Foundation, Citibank, Manila, Mr. Gatia, Rain or Shine, Ever Bilena, Fashion Gallery, Lee Plaridel, Sorsogon Lite Athletes, Phoenix, SAM and Mighty Spears Association.

TNT seeking Euro league vet as import

By Cedelff Tupaz

TALK OF TEXT, FRIED OFF ITS MA-FILIPPINE no-MVP-PBA Philippine Cup title conquest, is tapping a European league veteran as it would fix its original import choice for the Swiss Conference next month.

Coach Chot Reyes yesterday said the Tropang Texters are talking "four Plank" who has outstanding experience in some of the world's toughest leagues.

The 28-year-old Wade, a product of Louisiana-Lafayette who stands 6-foot-6, has played in Argentina, Italy, Spain, France, Hungary, Dominican Republic, Venezuela, Israel and Mexico.

"Wade is an old-school swingman with excellent perimeter shooting skills, complemented by a strong body that allows him to create his own shots," revealing report pointed out the NBA Cleveland-oppressed league veteran said.

Wade said, reported as finish the reservations for the Texters since they have made up their mind to tap former Utah Jazz import Rashad Bell, who, however, is still playing in Hungary.

"We really need an inside presence," said Reyes on the lineup in European yesterday.

Reyes pointed to San Miguel, Alaska, Purefoods and Ginebra as the favorites in the Swiss Conference.

"We just need that one's very little time for us to prepare," said Reyes.

"I just hope the momentum of our All-Filipino win will carry us. It's going to be a long tournament and we pointed to re-set and get recharged."

Coach Chot named Jeffrey Telle 'N Text import JJ Sullinger as its reinforcements, while Burger King, formerly ArcH, will have the body Shawn Daniels back. Kelly or Shaw will have Charles Clark, although it has standby import in Ati Lewis, a former roommate of Gabe Norwood at George Mason.

Purefoods, nevertheless, has yet to make up its mind on Reggie Garcy.

"We will want to see him in non-up games," said Giants assistant coach Jess Reted. "But he's a work in progress."

YBAG Wade plays for for an Argentinian team in Buenos Aires. AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Quek pips Aunzo in long playoff

From page 4[2]

And coming from the middle of the fairway with their 10 inch irons, Aunzo flew a solid wedge way past the flag and left himself with a pair of more than 30 feet from the fringe. He missed, allowing Quek to take the playoff to another hole.

By, meanwhile, struggled on the third parking and re-ready and hallowed in a 78 to finish way behind.

Mark Hernando, the first-round leader, admitted a 77 to tie Norberto Fernando (75), Lee Dimsoel Ibarra (78) and Peter Villalon (80), ended tied at 304.

Jason Balandran, an exact of the National Golden Open program, wound up seventh, another stroke back after the worries of a 71.

Chilton Rocha captured an women's champion with easy and fifties, shooting a final round 71 for a 14-under 202[blurred] and an 11-under victory over Anna Tampinco.

The final round scores:

Men: 70 — Quek, 2 (68-[illegible]-71-70) ([illegible]) Aunzo, 3 (71-75-77-70) (3-30-30-30) 299 — Fernando, 80 (69-75-77-77) (9-30-30-30) 301 — Ibarra, 81 (71-[illegible]-78-[illegible]) (11-30-[illegible]-30) 304 — Hernando, 6 (70-[illegible]-77-[illegible]) (1-30-[illegible]-30) 305 — Villalon, 7 (73-72-77-83) (3-30-30-30) 306 — Balandran, 2 (70-72-77-77) (2-30-30-30) 309 — Lee, 20 ([illegible]-77-77-77) (28-30-30-30) 310 — Arga, 42 (77-79-72-[illegible]) (30-30-30-30) 311 — Abrad, 1 (80-75-76-[illegible]) (30-30-30-30)

Ladies: 202 — Rocha, 1 (71-65-71-75) (29-30-30-30) 213 — Tampinco, 2 (75-72-[illegible]-[illegible]) (30-30-30-30) 214 — Ramos, 3 ([illegible]-[illegible]-[illegible]-[illegible]) (30-30-30-30) 215 — Ramos, 4 ([illegible]-[illegible]-[illegible]-[illegible]) (30-30-30-30) 216 — Ramos, 5 ([illegible]-[illegible]-[illegible]-[illegible]) (30-30-30-30) 217 — Ramos, 6 ([illegible]-[illegible]-[illegible]-[illegible]) (30-30-30-30) 218 — Ramos, 7 ([illegible]-[illegible]-[illegible]-[illegible]) (30-30-30-30) 219 — Ramos, 8 ([illegible]-[illegible]-[illegible]-[illegible]) (30-30-30-30) 220 — Ramos, 9 ([illegible]-[illegible]-[illegible]-[illegible]) (30-30-30-30)

Ayala-Alabang golf stakes Lexus

A LEXUS IS 250 IS AT STAKE AS A HOLE-IN-ONE prizes in the first Barangay Ayala-Alabang Golf Classic set Tuesday at the Alabang Country Club course. The prize just up to the event sponsored Lexus Manila is included in the one of the most impressive major prizes offered in the local golf scene.

The 18-hole event, open only to residents of the Ayala-Alabang Village, is also sponsored by Inquirer Golf, Globe, Pointbank, Yakult, Pal-Sports, Club Tee, 357 Rentals, Rain, Rolly Marcos, Marriott Construction, Bangko Mabuhay, Pasig Century, Philippine Prudential Life Insurance and Wonderpark Amusement Corp.

Ayala-Alabang barangay chair Rolen Paez and homeowners association chair Manuel Pamintuan recognized the partnership with Lexus through Lexus Manila president Danny Isa and GM Wayne Tsai.

PUCAY 7 story sixth

Pucay fires 70, stays in touch with Chia

KUALA LUMPUR – FILIPINO NOELLE CUPPER Mann Pucay shot a two-under par 70 Friday to gain a share of 13th place, seven shots off Malaysian leader Lionel Chia, after the second round of the Maybank Malaysia Open at the Saujana Golf and Country Club's Palm Course.

Starting the round in 17th place, Pucay gained three base birdies but dropped two shots on two of the last five holes for a two-round total of five-under 139.

Jarin Phiphatsan, tied for third in the season-opening Asian Tour International in Bangkok last week, was one shot behind his compatriots after a one-over 73 for 140. He dropped six-a 13-player to the 21st place.

Phiphatsan's social was marred by a double-bogey on the par-five 15th, the same hole he bogeyed in the first two rounds.

Fredric Mihlerg followed up his even-par round overnight with a two-under 70 Friday and moved to a nine-player to be 4-6th place on 142.

Angelo Que shot his own version of a 70 and barely made the halfway cut at 143 in a massive 39-way tie for 53rd place.

Chia fired two eagles, four birdies against a lone dropped shot for a 13-under par 131 total in the 54-hole Asian Tour and his opponent. Nine ran-tested events.

He missed a three-shot lead over Alexander Bowen of Sweden, Jeong and Park, when he cited with a 62 in the first round, is a stroke behind to third, after shooting a one-over 73.

A cracks back-seven English-born Simon Gotthelm who started a 66 and Nick Dougherty who carried a 70. Arnemia Hendrawan missed the cut and a five-over 149.

Asian Tour News

MOST VALUABLE - Pro-Ills Talk 'N Text point-guard Macmac Cardona (fourth from left) shows his plaque as Mighty Bond Finals MVP at the end of the KFC-PBA Philippine Cup match at the Araneta Coliseum Wednesday. With Cardona are PBA commissioner Sonny Barrios, vice-chair Lito Alvarez, Mighty Bond officials Bernard Huertas, lawyer Manuel Chan and Willem Tan, and PBA Press Corps officers Nelson Beltran and Armand Caraballeg

UST, Adamson gun for twin UAAP crowns

By Jasmine W. Payo

OUTRIGHT CHAMPIONSHIPS ARE UP FOR GRABS tonight as the University of Santo Tomas and Adamson in three UAAP games this weekend.

Junior Tomas goes for another double-crown in the men and women's tennis competition as it tries to wrap up the elimination with a sweep today at the Rizal Memorial Tennis Center.

Adamson, meanwhile, can move with no finish the elimination endeavor and capture the titles in baseball and softball at the Rizal Memorial ballpark.

The tennis crowd classified in women's football following a seattle knocking defending champion the Ateneo University and game title crash-less event match.

For Tomas's Ateneo mentor Alex Chavez got elected for physically something a referee, while Adamson Mike Vitaliz Flores Michelle Lagdameo and three other players also got the boot for unsportsmanlike conduct in a tennis match against the Tigresses.

The National Capital Region Football Association is expected to take action these other league of the incidents in the first one game.

Meanwhile, badminton and fencing competitions will kick off in separate venues into the weekend.

Michelle Rosario, last season's Athlete of the Year, spearheads University of the East's title retention bid in women's fencing as UST aims to keep the men's crown at the Blue Eagle Gym.

La Salle also shoots for another title in men's badminton, while UST tries for the same goal in their fencing title in the Rizal Memorial Badminton Hall.

In volleyball, the Tigers seek an elimination-round sweep and an outright finish both against Ateneo today at The Arena in San Juan.

Lady Stags go in NCAA beach volley

Over at the NCAA, defending champion San Sebastian remained unbeaten in two games in the beach volleyball tournament with the pair of Mercedes Pepito and reigning MVP Ian Abalajan dominating their respective events, while Jose Rizal University and Philippine Christian University at the La Salle Green field same events.

Milo Marathon 21K elims goes to Batangas, Iligan

THE MILO MARATHON RESUMES TOMORROW with series dubbing in Batangas City and Iligan City.

It will be a three-cornered fight in Batangas as last year's leg winner Mayor Beaver who re-defend his title against a field headed by six-time Milo Marathon national champion Eva Arece and the equally formidable Cristel Abad.

Mayor Magtibay is touted to rule the women's division.

Over in Iligan, veterans runner Roger Bonifo Jr. of Bukidnon, Jeffrey Sison and Brian Quinanes are expected to figure prominently for the men's 21K event.

"We expect another festive Sunday with more than 15,000 runners traversing the scenic route at the same time," said Nestle AVP and Milo Sports Events executive Ito Gascang.

Participants are hoping to make the grade in the 21K elimination race where the qualifying time is one hour and 15 minutes for the men and 1:35 for women.

The qualifiers will vie in all-expense paid trip to the 26th Marathon grand finals slated on Oct. 11 in Manila.

Also on tap are 10K, 5K and 3K runs and interschool cross-country events.

Race director Rudy Biscocho yesterday advised all participants to be at the starting area not later than 5 a.m. for pre-race briefing and check-in.

George Guerra, Contributor

Great Valentine's for MVP, Macmac, Maid Miriam

EXTRAORDINARY FEAT: MAY ONLY make history, two into help mold a people's faith.

The explosive Philippine Cup champ-ending, a first-class impressive victory, was such a screaming success the PBA commissioner, even Sonny Barrios, couldn't resist the heroes he should thank.

OK, it's no longer possible to shake a few hands among the over 35,000 basketball devotees, including United States ambassador Kristie Kenney who came running to the Big Dome to see Mathews, Jayjay Helterbrand, Jason Castro 'I' Brownie, Jimmy Alapag, Jason Castro 'I' Brownie, external relations Talk 'N Text and the equally worthy Gamboa.

But commissioner Sonny Barrios, if he has not done it yet, should personally congratulate team owner Manny 'I' Pangilinan.

* * *

Barrios should also name names to name an MVP for—with the Make-match, here he'd do it.

Imagine clawing and crawling back from an awful 0-2 hole in the best-of-seven, and winning explosively in one of those memorable finals wrecking in the PBA.

BARE EYE

Hercab Trinidad

For the record, last Wednesday's 4-0 victorious—obviously a third straight for the gamers—was Jaworski Pangilinan, following victories by San Beda in the NCAA and Ateneo in the UAAP.

Call it a personal point then to "educate" Barrios that the most valuable MVP as [illegible] the commercial point of a truly-found sportsman.

* * *

So, also Pangilinan, who does consistently deserves not to get [illegible].

There were those flash a couple of unforgettable performances in the finals out of Finals Gaspenar Bowers.

Yes, it's no longer easy singling out the stars standing from among the achievers that included cornerbacking coach Chot Reyes, thirty-lay Hugnatan and the like James Canno, who sparkled like a meteor out of the night sky to dish out big, juicy assists for TNT.

In the end, though, the choice had to be left between two very very valuable players.

* * *

Take your pick between side-swiss MVP-lineman Cardona and rookie-sweet sup-player Willy Miller.

Their personal battle, the cards mastermind of the SP Clap finals, was hands-down, the main lure that drew in the big crowds.

Of course, the biggest come-on was the glory theme savored by coach Tim Cone to encode the team-making Cardona.

The PBA instantly hit a jackpot in the game after Cone documented to send Macmac shooting down, hand first, if he did not keep his mouth shut in Game 7.

The promise of forgiveness on the floor, no doubt, sent incredible blood-thirsty fans shouting in the game.

* * *

Cardona did keep his mouth shut but, in return, came up with 22 big points despite being shackled by Larry Sheaffer in the final game.

Miller, however, stoked up the biggest talk of the basketball town after his drive-by-shooting, one from the serenity of the foul line, followed by a blind and wild if-not-all.

Actually, the Miller free throw raises no longer seemed an accident to many fans, cousin Sheila Richards, who barely got "hand and foot" into the familiar serenity.

Now, if the loud displeasure over Miller's ugly finale appeared well-founded, it was because that was not the first time the young millionaire had been caught in that dirty spot.

Unfortunately, the unsettling anomaly is being overshadowed by a female brewing where the answer, in this case the future flame, has ended up being the second.

Now with the drama back of the people in the Imperial Palace Complex, it's just right to empire that the sick and belongings [illegible] replaced up being all the more to the shop-soiled.

In future, for the relieved: 30 is visible the new coming Sen. Miriam Defensor Happy Valentine's.

POC sets silver standard for Laos

By Mar; Anthony Reyes and Cudell P. Rojas

THE PHILIPPINE OLYMPIC COMMITTEE YESterday set a high standard for athletes vying to make it to the Laos Southeast Asian Games, requiring them to have at least won a silver in previous games to qualify for their participation.

Still, the new criteria would automatically qualify 132 athletes... 41 gold medalists and 91 silver winners in the 2007 Thailand SEA Games—with more expected to make it when the POC "invites" wildcards.

SEA Games chief of mission Mario Lim-Juego said their major consideration for the move also is the "small budget" the Philippine Sports Commission earlier earmarked... P30 million.

But newly installed POC chief Peter Angging said the budget for the actual competition "is no problem" and could even be increased to P40 million.

"The concern is the budget for the training," said Angging.

At any rate, Limbaga-juego, the squat sixtern chief, said it was just a draft that was submitted to the national sports associations, which will then be asked to give feedback.

"Eventually, we will make adjustments; it was still because we don't want the athletes to unwind, only well otherwise it could cause trouble," the chargee said in the interview.

Amateur Boxing Association of the Philippines president Ricky Vargas expressed hope that the POC will give more leeway to MAs in banning their wards for the SEA Games.

Speaking at the forum in Ilamayan, Vargas yesterday said the ABAP is pinning premium in forming a team with a "viable mix of veterans and up-and-coming boxers" for the biennial classic since some of their wards in the previous games are also seniors in the national team.

"We are calling new talents," said Vargas. "We learn to get the best of the old and mix them with the best in the new. That will be our representation for the coming SEA Games."

He added: "I believe it is the SEA that should be accountable for the medals and not the POC."

Limbagan said that those who won't make the cutoff based on the initial criteria can battle each other in the boxer-on-boxer challenges.

Previously, athletes who have won medals in the previous SEA Games readily make the team.

"The POC writes a letter and forum letter," said Limbagan, who is set to discuss the criteria with Angging on Tuesday.

At BETWEEN making two big jumpers for the Boston Celtics, Paul Pierce takes an elbow from Dallas Mavericks star Dirk Nowitzki. AFP/AB

Pierce gets the job done for Celtics

DALLAS—PAUL PIERCE SCORED 16 OF HIS TEAM-HIGH 31 points in the fourth quarter to spark champions Boston Celtics to a second-half rally for a 99-92 win over the Dallas Mavericks on Thursday.

The Celtics fortward got in ten straight jump shots in the final minutes, and point guard Rajon Rondo recorded a triple double with 18 points, 13 rebounds and 14 assists to help Boston (44-11) extend into the All-Star break with a momentous road win.

"This is going to make the All-Star weekend that much sweeter," Pierce told reporters. "It was the best game I've had in a long, and a big win for us tonight."

"I felt good. But whole fourth quarter. We kept running the same play and just took advantage of it."

Mavericks All-Star Dirk Nowitzki poured in a game-high 27 points, including a game-tying three-pointer with 2:26 left.

Pierce responded with an 11-footer on Boston's next possession and Chris—after taking an elbow to the face from Nowitzki—added a pull-up to make it 93-91 with 58 seconds left.

The Celtics trailed 65-50 with 6:17 left in the third before running it up a level defensively. The defending NBA champions held Dallas to just 17 points in the third quarter and closed the game with a 20-9 run.

Josh Howard had 17 points for the Mavericks (33-21) before fouling out with 3:07 to go.

Already without starting point guard Jason Terry, who broke his left hand on Saturday, the Mavericks' offense went cold down the stretch. Nowitzki made just 6-of-18 shots in the second half.

Heat 95, Bulls 93

In Chicago, Shawn Marion's dunk with a second left gave Miami a thrilling win over Chicago.

Dwyane Wade, who finished with 24 points, found Marion for the decisive dunk.

The win moved Miami seven games behind Boston in the fifth-best record in the Eastern Conference.

Warriors 105, Trail Blazers 98

In Oakland, California, Golden State brought up a chief straight victory by defeating Portland.

Corey Maggette had 24 points and Monta Ellis made three key late baskets for the Warriors, who led by 18 points in the second half but saw Portland pull within four with 25 seconds remaining. Golden State went 8-for-8 from the foul line to close the game out.

The Blazers have not won at Golden State since 2004. Reuters, AP

All-Star game puts Shaq, Kobe together again

PHOENIX—EVE NBA ALL-STAR GAME will be the return of the Shaquille O'Neal-Kobe Bryant pairing that once dominated league headlines, on and off the court.

Together they led the Los Angeles Lakers to three straight championships and four finals berths in five years, but their union was eventually overshadowed by the behind-the-scenes spat of their breakup.

On Sunday they'll be on the same team for the first time since the 2004 NBA finals, which the Lakers went blanked off to Detroit. They ended sporadic barbs through the years after O'Neal's departure, but now they've pointed dukes up—with O'Neal saying they never were that bad in the first place.

"That will be kind of fun as we have well over hook up together," said Lakers coach Phil Jackson, who will coach the team in the Western Conference team. "I think there's no doubt about the fact they'll have a rekindling. They will are very friendly."

O'Neal was chosen to 14 straight All-Star games before missing last year during an injury-plagued season. Five players were voted in by coaches after the fans picked the first seven in popularity with fans and fellow players.

"I'm a very lucky player because I come through these different eras of the All-Star game," O'Neal said. "I went through the Jordan era, where it was Jordan [Jordan] and [Charles] Barkley and all those guys, and I went through my era, when it was me all the time and Kobe, and now it's the Kobe-LeBron, D-Wade era. Dwight's forward now. So I've been lucky enough to go through all three of those eras[sic]."

Justice had a role to play in the weekend, which the Rookie for this year's Rookie-Sophomore game. Justice was appointed on Friday. The real was left for the players, who have returned for starter as the host to the league.

Bryant and LeBron James have dominated in recent All-Star games, combining for the last three MVP awards. James said he thinks three quarters are for fun, but, "the fourth quarter, that's when we all really want to play hard. The fourth quarter is buckle-down time." AP

MLB chief says A-Rod 'shamed' baseball

TAMPA, FLORIDA—UNABLE TO POSSIBLY Alex Rodriguez for thinking a drug test that was supposed to be anonymous, Major League Baseball commissioner Bud Selig could only clear his him.

"What miss did was wrong and he will have to live with the damage he has done to his career and reputation," the commissioner said Thursday three days after the Yankees slugger admitted using banned substances from 2001-2003 while playing for the Texas Rangers.

While Alex deserves credit for publicly confronting the issue, there is no valid excuse for using such substances, and those who use them have shamed the game."

Rodriguez's admission followed a Sports Illustrated report that he was on a list of 104 players who tested positive for steroids in 2003, when testing was intended only to determine the extent of steroid use in baseball. The results were released to the government in 2004 and remain under seal.

Because it was an anonymous test and because Rodriguez's confession involved the years before the drug agreement took effect, there is little Selig can do to punish him.

Players and owners didn't agree to a joint drug program until August 2002, and testing with punishments didn't start until 2004. AP

JONATHAN Tiu (center) cups his three straight overall drag racing crown with an incredible new all-time fastest quarter-mile record of 9.223 seconds during the eighteenth series of the Pagcor-Drag Racing championship at the Clark International Speedway Drag Strip.

Tiu bags third straight drag crown

CLARK[illegible]

DRIVER 1. Jonathan Tiu, 10 points; 2. David Lee, 20; 3. Ken Kapoor, 31; 4. Dave Cuenca, 33; 5. Dwight Ee, 35.

PRO. 1. Tiu Clarito, 20 points; 2. Edwin Reyes, 23; 3. John Ryan, 31; 4. Edgar Ee, 34; 5. Wily Wee, 35; 6. Ryan Ee, 35.

DRIVER 2. Jonathan Young, 30 points; 2. Paul Henderson Perez, 31; 3. Joel Cordero, 33; 4. Vico Bringas, 35; 5. Danny Reyes, Rhoda Mendez, Arsenio Tabalno, 38.

DRIVER CLASS 1. Jonathan Manuel, 10 points; 2. Mario Abes-Mendoza, 15; 3. Eduardo Santos Jr., 20; 4. Paulo Rodriguez, 21; 5. Phoenix Ruiz, Mark Chua, Sen Calimag, Mark Pascual, 25.

PRO CLASS 1. Jonathan Cruz, 20 points; 2. Gerardo Ocampo, 25; 3. Glenn Garcia, 30; 4. Eric Diaz, Mark Bringas, Louie Boys, Juan Miguel Gutierrez, 35.

CLARK, PAMPANGA—JONATHAN Tiu of JOY Filmworks Racing pulled off another record-breaking run en route to the overall crown of the 2008 Pagcor Drag racing Championships-Northern Series at the Clark International Speedway Drag Racing here.

It was Tiu's third straight championship after clinching back-to-back titles at the Remington Racing Circuit. The title also entered Nela to cling more in the kickoff of the 2009 Asia Drag Cobra Motorsport Drag Racing Championship National Trophy Series.

But when made his first three entrance was his impressive racing form which is supposed to be difficult to match this quite sometimes. He clocked a new all-time fastest quarter-mile mark of 9.223 seconds in turning back Defensive David Lim of DEL Motorsports.

Tiu wrapped up the series with a total of 38 points while his next home-side duo overall runner-up Jhon Lee with 25. Vincent Garcia of PK Autosports hammer and arrived 05 secretariat first Keppen of SUBA shared third place with 31 points apiece.

The final round was witnessed a cross family affair as Edgar Ee, a first-time drag racing dusting, and his son sons, Ed Christian and Ed Gerhon, place all more home with trophies.

Estanislao, Alcala lead Prima winners

ISRAEL ESTANISLAO AND MAGYVINE Alcala underscored their bids as the country's next badminton stars by leading the roster of champions in the Prima Pasta International Badminton Open at the Powerstrength Badminton Center recently.

Estanislao topped the Men, posting hands with Paul Vivas to win the men's doubles open and level 4 titles.

Alcala partnered with Kobmaiden to win the mixed doubles title at the expense of the tandem of Mia Villanis and Sunnie Wilkie 1 ner Pancreanas.

Alcala created her second title of the two-day event after partnering with Stella Castillo to beat Fatima Cruz and Raquel Guerrero for the women's level 5 crown.

Also raising their respective divisions in the men's category were Salvador Kapunan and RJ Dimalla (level 3), Ed Agustin and Matthew Lee (level 2), Lani Pangandaan and Paolo Pangco (level 2), Raja Abellar and Jonathan Mendoza (level 4) and Jonathan Bolano and Jojo Mallari (level 7).

Under 9/17 figure

Hiddink meets players

LONDON—CHELSEA MANAGER GUUS Hiddink met his new players for the first time Thursday—introduced in Boss at the Premier League club is manning complex by owner Roman Abramovich.

The 62-year-old Dutchman, who previously piloted the Real Luiz Felipe Scolari until the end of season while discharging his job as coach of Russia's national team, will sit assistant manager Ray Wilkins oversee Saturday's FA Cup match at Watford.

Hiddink will take control on Monday.

Chelsea is two points behind Third place Villa and seven behind leader Manchester United. AP

Police make arrests in Phelps case

COLUMBIA, SOUTH CAROLINA—All Hamilton and the South Carolina sheriff whose Michael Phelps was photographed with a marijuana pipe have been arresting people as they vows to make a case against the superstar swimmer, lawyers for fans arrested people said Thursday.

Attorneys Joseph McCulloch and Chris Harvey Watson said they each represented a client charged with possession of marijuana who were questioned about the party. Phelps attended was the University of South Carolina campus in November. AP

CITATION Tony Dos Santos, a board member of the Asian Beach Volleyball Federation, receives a token of appreciation as guest speaker during the NCAA Beach Volley Tour recently. Looking on is Lu Sale Grace Hills. Present during the awarding were event club Henry Amplo of College of St. Benilde-LSGH, Paul Supan of JRU and Phil Lacson of San Beda College.

SADP tabs semis slot

SAN ANTONIO DE PADUA BEAT Don Antonio Tanauan-pa Mensa rian Academy in three sets over the weekend to gain a shot at one of the four semifinal slots in the Shakey's Girls' Volleyball League.

With Kailee Jamie leading the offensive with 14 hits, the SADP stars downed their DAZMA counterparts, 25-20, 25-13,25-19 and set up all-important match with title rival Sheaker D. Jesus Delo Santos Lipa this weekend.

The two teams will enter for a place in the semifinals of this series supported by Rexon Steam, Tokyo sports, Dunkin' Donuts, Milkies and Asics.

Last Saturday, Dr. Le Bello Lipa swamped Angeles University Foundation sisters behind the heroics of Clarisse Agno, Katrina Camagan and Rhea dela Vega, 25-12, 25-21.

Despite the loss, AUF is still in contention for the semis once more. To make it, it must beat St. Colleges club Saturday.

In other matches, Southville Int'l School surprised Hillcrest Preparatory School, 16-25, 25-21, 25-21 and St. Francis of Assisi beat Arellanes College,25-16, 25-20.

SPORTS

MARCELO: Kuning

BUNCIO: Superbikes

Marcelo, Buncio head GW nominees

By Cedrik P. Tapas

JOMETRIC STEVEN STEFANO MARCELO and superbiker star Mindo Buncio again headline the list of nominees for the Athlete of the Week plums that will be handed out at the 8th Golden Wheel Awards on Feb. 22 at the Pagoda Grand Theater in Pasig City.

Marcelo and Buncio were the unsurprised choice and national riders of the year awards, respectively last year.

The other nominees for the riders of the year award are Jaime Garchitorena, Mike Dave (Grand Touring Car) and Jonathan Tan (Drag racing); Asha Serafica (motorcycling); Carlo Garcia (Rallies), Ivan Isada (Rallycross) and Kenneth Ian Andrew Dhokonsai).

The 16-year old Marcelo earned a nomination following his triumph in the Asian karting Open Championship last year. He is now part of the circuit, some of the highly touted signed Trophies team competing in Europe.

Asha Serafica won the FOX Senior plum—the highest honor achieved by the Philippines in the Asian Karting Open Championship series.

Buncio, now his second straight feder of the year title recently in the 2008 Shell advance Superbikes Series last October, while Garchitorena signified in the 2008 San Jog Coffee Underbone King Championship series.

Ian Andrew, also the second-best rider in the Asia-Pacific Motocross Championships, was declared Rider of the Year by the National Association of Sports and Safety Association after scoring a four-race sweep of both the premier Pro Open and 125 divisions in the ninth leg of the National Motocross Championships Mayor Emperor Cup.

The of JCI Rancho racing started in the 2008 Filipino Drag Racing Championships Southeast Series, as he set a new record in the Pro to Pro Super Charger class of 9.078 s in Clark currently.

The Golden Wheel Awards, sponsored by Pag-ibig Sports and Entire Philippines, is chaired by vice-sponsors godfather Johnny Tan.

"We're happy that the Golden Wheel awards has served as an inspiration for our Filipino drivers in the international scene," Tan said.

DLS-Lipa teams post twin kills in Toby's volley

DE LA SALLE LIPA TENPEC overpowered its rivals in the girls' division and kept second spot in the boys' section over the weekend in the Toby's Sports Volleyball League.

The DLS-Lipa spikers routed Hope Christian, 25-10, 25-9, and Mendo College, 25-11, 25-14, to improve their slate to 4-0 in the girls' section.

But in its matches, the DLS-Lipa netminders gained their true mettle when, beating College San Agustin, 25-14, 25-9 and then downing Asiatic School of QC, 25-9, 25-11, for a 2-1 record in the boys' section.

Chanel Island of QC also came undefeated going into the final week of eliminations after blasting Holy Trinity Academy 25-4, 25-9, for a 3-0 card in Section B of the boys' division of the tournament hosted by Shakey's, Power Team and Dunkin Donuts.

In other matches, MLC Sons Lipa recovering outlasted Del Pedro Malvinig, 22-25, 27-25, 25-9, in the girls' division (Section B); Lourdes Mandaluyong won over Holy Trinity, 25-8, 25-10, and SBC defeating whipped Montessori Malvinig, 25-10, 17-25, 25-15.

PISS-H 'Rambulan' Monday

GRACE-BY-LEADING GRANDTOWN, SHOOTS and the country's derby-tip-guns, the PTLS-Hotlion National Rambulan-9-Cock Derby kicks at the Ilaya Cockroom on Feb. 16, 18 and 19.

The cockfight series will be staged in 28 cockpits in Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao.

For the first time, a PI millionaire—the biggest ever—will be awarded to the champion handler. The winning gaffer gets P500,000.

Two-cock eliminations are staged on Monday and Wednesday with the 3-cock semifinals set on Feb. 21.

IN THIS ISSUE
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- Trans-Asia tweaks drilling program /B3

Editor Raul D. Marcelo • Assistant Editor Corrie S. Nartova
BUSINESS

Yuchengco group buys Laurel thrift bank

Acquisition jumpstarts RCBC's microfinance venture

By Doris C. Dumlao

RIZAL COMMERCIAL BANKING CORP. IS SET TO TAKE over the Laurel family's JP Laurel Rural Bank of Batangas, which the Yuchengco-owned bank will use as its platform to enter the microfinance business.

The bank announced yesterday an approved by its board of directors to put up a P275-million "shareholder advance facility" for JP Laurel Bank. The funds will be infused to win a three-year period starting this year and eventually result in the acquisition of the 102-branch rural bank.

The decision will take effect upon the final approval by the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas' policy-making Monetary Board of the terms of the agreement in line with the BSP's program and encouragement to create stronger banks in a more stable banking system.

"Looking at business models in other countries including Indonesia and Mexico, we see that microfinance holds a lot of promise both as a profitable financial venture and as a means to assist in the development of small businesses. These are some of the reasons why we have decided to finally take this first crucial step in RCBC's own foray to the microfinance business," RCBC president and CEO Lorenzo Tan said in a press statement.

Microfinance is the provision of small, uncollateralized loans to the poor to help them start their own businesses. This business has a potential for greater reach in the Philippines as existing institutions have tapped only a fraction of the potential market, based on studies from the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas.

The Yuchengco group gained interest in JP Laurel Rural Bank "given its rich history in serving the community with the prominent Laurel family of Batangas behind it." The Yuchengcos' businessgroup added that the rural bank's geographic coverage suited the overall business design of RCBC for its various products, including microfinance.

"RCBC plans to convert JP Laurel Bank, with its 10-branch network spread over Batangas, Laguna and Mindoro Occidental, into the Luzon base for its microfinance business operations. Once RCBC's microfinance business is up and running, our strategy will be to ride on the banking business of ensuring high efficiency and credit quality levels," Tan added.

The vision for RCBC is to expand both organically and through mergers and acquisitions. Last year, it acquired the 21-branch Merchants Savings and Loan Association from Pioneer Capital Corp. and the bulk of the late Lodi Mesogue for P920 million.

As of end-2008, RCBC had consolidated assets of P379.226 billion. It is among the country's top 10 banks and operates 324 branches.

Stocks end lower

SHARE PRICES CLOSED 0.2 PERCENT lower yesterday due to profit-taking following a positive opening, dealers said.

The composite index gained 4.44 points to 1,810.60 while the all-shares index fell 0.01 percent to 1,044.00 points.

There were 35 gainers, 30 losers and 51 unchanged.

Volume totaled 3.63 billion shares worth P1.79 billion.

"There was profit-taking on an intra-day basis," said Jomar Lanete of Campos Lanuza and Co. Inc.

"There was a little optimism at the opening but when somebody starts selling, everybody follows the trend," he said.

STOCKS /B2

BSP sees no need for bailout plan

By Michelle V. Remo

MANILA FINANCIAL INSTITUtions in the United States and other advanced economies have enjoyed generous bailout packages from their governments in the wake of the global turmoil, banks in the Philippines cannot expect the same support.

The Bangko Sentral said that aside from the fact that the Philippine government lacked the financial muscle to rescue failing corporations, providing sovereign guarantees to bank credits was something diametrically opposed to the monetary authority.

CLEMENCIADO

"Banks should not expect [the government] to guarantee credit because we have not reached that point where credits have losses. More important, moral hazard will be generated if such will be granted," BSP Deputy Governor Diwa Guinigundo said.

BSP SEES /B2

Layoffs may hit 200,000 this year, says Neda exec

By Bernel W. Dominguez

BETWEEN 40,000 AND 200,000 PEOPLE will lose their jobs this year even as the government expects continued growth amid the worsening impact of the global financial crisis.

Ernesto Arevalo, a director at the National Economic and Development Authority, said such layoffs would raise the unemployment rate, but that this would remain to single-digit.

Available Neda data showed that as of October 2008, the unemployment rate was at 8.4 percent. This means that about seven out of every hundred people aged between 15 and 64 years and seeking work would not find any.

Arevalo, who heads Neda's national planning and policy staff, said the Department of Labor Employment was addressing the issue by shifting the deployment of overseas workers from countries with weak demand to those with strong demand.

"The Middle East countries are responding to the [global financial] crisis by postponing and spending on infrastructure projects," he said.

"That will boost OFW employment in construction," he added. "There are also new markets in Asia, New Zealand and South America."

In a January briefing, Neda director general Ralph G. Recto said that in the current job crunch, the Philippine economy could

LAYOFFS /B2

Q1 inflation seen at 7%

PAL paying $60M in maturing debt

FLAG CARRIER PHILIPPINE AIRLINES (PAL) is set to retire up to $60 million in maturing debts in June, reducing its outstanding debt stock by about 6 percent.

The airline is, however, expected to incur a net loss for the full fiscal year ending March this year, as operations were hit hard by the surge in aviation fuel prices last year, PAL president Jaime Bautista told reporters at the sidelines of a Security Bank economic briefing.

Bautista said PAL's debt stock, which had already been reduced to $900 million from a high of $1.5 billion, rose to $1 billion as the airline borrowed additional funds to its refinancing program.

Asked about the carrier's income for December, the last quarter of its fiscal year would likely yield profit but it would not be enough to offset losses of the first three quarters.

"We already reported our first six month loss. In the third quarter, we will lose again but, hopefully, we will post a profit in the last quarter," Bautista said.

PAL incurred a net loss of $113.8 million in the first two quarters of its fiscal year ending Sept. 30.

The financial hemorrhage was due to the increase in fuel prices, he said. Since September last year when global fuel prices started going down, PAL stopped increasing its fuel budget. — Doris C. Dumlao

Gov't growth projections under review

By Michelle V Baron

THE BANGKO SENTRAL NG Pilipinas (BSP) said it expected inflation to average 7 percent in the first quarter, slower than the 9.7 percent in the last quarter of 2008, in view of the expected favorable supply conditions and easing demand.

"The BSP's inflation forecast indicates a much lower inflation path relative to that in the previous quarter. If one looks at the balance of risks to inflation, these are tilted to the downside," Cid Amador BSP's managing director for monetary policy sub-sector, said during a briefing on inflation.

Amador said the BSP was seeing some inflationary risks, including volatility of oil prices and likely hike in electricity rates, but said these were outweighed by factors that could slowdown inflation.

The global economy slowdown is seen to dampen consumer and corporate demand for goods and services. Also, Amador said there was no threat to the supply of rice and other food products given forecasts of a relatively good weather.

In the meantime, members of the Development Budget Coordination Committee (DBCC) are reviewing the government economic growth forecast for the year of 3.7- 4.7 percent to take into account the likely worse impact of the global turmoil on the domestic economy.

The DBCC is expected to come out with its new economic growth projection, if it decides to make a revision, before the end of this month.

BSP Deputy Governor Diwa Guinigundo reiterated the BSP's earlier statements that inflation in 2009 and 2010 would remain within the official target for this year, the average inflation is projected to reach 4.9 percent and for 2010, 4.7 percent.

Consistent with the 2009 inflation forecast, Guinigundo said the average increase in consumer prices in the first quarter would be 7 percent, second quarter, 3.5 percent; third quarter, between 1 and 2.5 percent, and fourth quarter, at 3.6 percent.

He said inflation would increase next in the third quarter but ends up slightly in the fourth quarter because of base effects.

JFC posted 20% profit growth in Q4

By Doris C. Dumlao

JOLLIBEE FOOD CORP. (JFC) yesterday reported a 20.2 percent year-on-year rise in its fourth quarter net profit to P880.50 million, on the back of strong sales in both the local and overseas markets, new store opening and acquisition of a new business in China.

But full-year net income fell by 3.8 percent to P2.2 billion amid a slowing domestic economy, the company disclosed to the Philippine Stock Exchange.

JFC's system-wide sales were up by 16.1 percent in the fourth quarter and by 12.8 percent in the whole year.

Company CEO Tony Tan Caktiong said fourth quarter sales growth in both the Philippine and foreign markets was strong.

"The system-wide sales in the Philippines grew by 11.3 percent and in foreign operations, by 19.8 percent. This included the effect of our acquisition of Hongzhuang-Yonghe restaurant chain in Beijing in October 2008," he said.

Excluding this acquisition, JFC's sales from foreign operations grew by 10.6 percent, driven mainly by Yonghe King in the People's Republic of China and Jollibee in the United States.

As of the fourth quarter of 2008, Tan Caktiong said foreign operations already accounted for 15.9 percent of JFC's systemwide sales, up from 10.7 percent in the fourth quarter of 2007 and 1 percent five years ago.

"Our aim is to derive at least half of our revenue from outside of the Philippines as some point in the future, both from organic and acquisitions, even as we expect our Philippine business to sustain a healthy growth rate in the years to come," he said.

Tan Caktiong also noted that JFC made long-term investments in 2008 despite the sharp rise in commodity prices, tightening of credit and economic downturn in many parts of the world.

"We opened 1,081 new stores, 119 in the Philippines and 76 abroad, slightly more than the number we had in 2007 of 176. We invested P3.8 billion in capital expenditure, 35 percent more than what we spent in 2007," he added.

JFC chief finance officer Ysmael Baysa said that the fourth quarter gross profit margin of 32.3 percent was unchanged from the level in the same period in 2007.

"The fourth quarter of 2008 was the first time JFC margins stabilized after several quarters of margin decline caused by the rising cost of production.

Digiwave sells gaming software

DIGIWAVE SOLUTIONS INC., A SOFTWARE development company, said it sold six of its online gaming softwares to Korea-based software firm Grandsoftgood Management Inc. for $1 million or about P49.41 million.

In a statement, Digiwave said the deal was sealed after five months of negotiations. During the talks, Digiwave says representatives of its exec climb Chang Hyun Lee, while Grandsoftgood was represented by its chief executive officer Chang Han Lee.

Grandsoftgood bought the following software from Digiwave: 7-Card Stud Poker, Texas Hold 'Em Poker, Baccarat, Super 6, Fachai and Mahjong.

It plans to set up kiosks offering the said games in Korea and other parts of Asia.

Under the agreement, Grandsoftgood committed to buy 300 to 400 licenses of Digiwave's software packages, which were developed by a composite team of license and Filipino software engineers.

"Digiwave's gaming software are world class and of very high quality. The software features a Random Number Generator and Associated Components certification from the Gaming Laboratories Pty Ltd., an Australian gaming consultancy," said Digiwave president Jorito Bajar.

This ensures the RNG generated results are uniformly distributed, statistically independent and that the game symbols are fair and unpredictable, he explained. Elizabeth Sanchez-Lorenzo

Bid deadline for Philamlife set

SUITORS OF THE AMERICAN International Group's local crown jewel, Philippine-American Life and General Insurance Co. (Philamlife), were given until Feb. 23 to submit an acquisition proposal, industry sources said yesterday.

Expected to bid are the country's top three banks—Banco De Oro Unibank, Metropolitan Bank and Trust Co. and Bank of the Philippine Islands—and global player Manulife-owned Life Insurance Co. (Manulife).

BDO will bid for Philamlife in partnership with General Pilipinas, a bank-done Tweenie by Caesar sold the business yesterday. He said BDO would have a 48-percent share in the joint venture while General hold a 60-percent interest.

The position of General Assurance includes the Rizal group investors and Jewell Asia Berhad," he said.

It was earlier reported that BPI may team up with British insurance giant Prudential Plc, while Metrobank will bid with its former insurance partner, Pacific General Alfa.

Meanwhile, Sen. Ian Miguel Corp. president Ramon Ang said the food beverage giant was not participating in the bidding.

Philippine Long Distance Co. chair Manuel Pangilinan also said the Pan Pacific group was also not interested, saying it was not into financial services.

Philamlife chief Tan Lim Ah Cone do has already dropped out in the early part of the race.

From page B1

BSP sees . . .

The BSP official said more guarantees of bank credits could be aimed at protecting the banking industry from failing, but could actually have an adverse consequence. Sovereign guarantees could prompt banks to be less careful in assessing risks.

Guinigundo's also explained that sovereign guarantees for bank credits were not necessary, stressing that the financial market in the Philippines remained able to do its role of providing liquidity in the system. Credit tightening has not happened in the country yet as banks continue to lend at a healthy level to businesses, consumers and to one another, he added.

BSP governor Amando Tetangco Jr. showed that loans by the country's commercial and commercial banks reached P1.93 trillion as of November last year, up 21.2 percent from the P1.6 trillion in the same period in 2007.

Guinigundo said the BSP would continue to have a policy geared toward ensuring efficient operations of the country's financial centers, making it able to provide needed liquidity support in the event of economic growth.

From page B1

Layoffs may . . .

only create 500,000 jobs this year provided that it grows at the same rate as last year and the government would spend efficiently.

"That breakeven point to employment is about 900,000 as the same number as those entering the job market this year," he said. "But that is possible only if the economy will grow 7 to 9 percent like China."

Recto said that since most of those who could not get jobs were aged 15 to 24 years, they should not be out looking for jobs but instead studying up on skills in anticipation of an eventual economic upturn.

"The challenge also is to get them back to school—either in colleges or universities or to technical-vocational schools," he said. "The idea is to train them, equip them with skills so when the global rebound comes, it is easier for them to get a job."

Stocks end lower

From page B1

But the downward movement "doesn't really amount to much. You look at the index for the day, it is very much balanced. I've been in the same coterie of laggards as usual."

Manila Electric Co. was unchanged at P81 while Ayala Corp. gained 0.68 percent to P307.

San Miguel Corp. rose 81 "B" shares or 2.2 percent to P44 while its "B" shares also fell 2.2 percent to P44.50. AFP

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE
(As of February 13, 2009)

CURRENCIES

Country	Unit	Peso Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.7136	1.000000	0.7136
Japan	Yen	0.008049	0.010881	0.1103
United Kingdom	Pound	1.0309	1.393310	0.7136
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.1203	0.170892	0.1203
Switzerland	Franc	0.6555	0.918800	0.6555
Canada	Dollar	0.5720	0.801820	0.5720
Singapore	Dollar	0.5143	0.687631	0.5143
Australia	Dollar	0.4980	0.672900	0.4980
Bahrain	Dinar	1.8936	2.558253	1.8936
Saudi Arabia	Riyal	0.1903	0.257200	0.1903
Kuwait	Dinar	2.4784	3.349200	2.4784
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.00006	0.000085	0.0640
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.1943	0.262600	0.1943
Thailand	Baht	0.0211	0.028500	0.0211
EU	Euro	0.9209	1.244000	0.9209
Korea	Won	0.0005	0.000700	0.0005
Taiwan	Dollar	0.2177	0.294100	0.2177
China	Yuan	0.1045	0.141200	0.1045
Brunei	Dollar	0.5143	0.687631	0.5143
Vietnam	Dong	0.0000	0.000000	0.0000
India	Rupee	0.0145	0.019600	0.0145
Mexico	Peso	0.0514	0.069400	0.0514
New Zealand	Dollar	0.4070	0.549900	0.4070
Sweden	Krona	0.0967	0.130700	0.0967
Qatar	Riyal	0.1960	0.264800	0.1960

Trans-Asia tweaks drilling program

By Amy R. Remo

TRANS-ASIA OIL AND ENERGY DEVELOPMENT Corp. said the government has approved the request of the consortium operating Service Contract 55 to amend its drilling commitments under the current exploration period.

In a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange, Trans-Asia said the Department of Energy has allowed the SC 55 consortium to drill deepwater wells off Palawan (with a water depth of more than 200 meters) instead of the ultra-deepwater well (with a water depth of more than 1,000 feet) that it earlier committed.

Under the original contract, the SC 55 consortium was supposed to drill one ultra-deepwater well before its exploration program expires.

The SC 55 consortium is composed of Trans-Asia, which has a 25-percent participating interest, and Australian Exxis Dito Energy Ltd. and BHP Billiton Petroleum Pty Ltd., which have 25-percent and 40-percent working interests, respectively.

Based on preliminary seismic data, Dito Energy said the service contract area was estimated to contain approximately 1.8 trillion cubic feet (TCF) of gas and 557 million barrels of oil.

Rich stone is found in the area, also known as the Hyunsono prospect, prospective resource estimates are placed at between 320 million and close to 1.7 billion barrels.

Dito acquired 600 kilometers of prospect-specific 2D seismic data in October 2006 and another 965 kilometers of seismic data in June 2007. Those data were reprocessed last year, in preparation for eventual drilling in 2010.

Dito Energy, which originally had an 85-percent interest in the contract, recently farmed out 60 percent of its stake in SC 55 to BHP.

The two companies in turn are expected to finalize within the first half of the year a board of agreement for SC 55, wherein BHP Billiton is expected to reimburse Dito for back costs and pay the full cost of a 3D seismic program and the drilling of two deepwater exploration wells.

If the agreement pushes through, BHP would also be appointed as the operator of SC 55.

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Organic farming bills pushed

By Rita T. Olchondra

A CONGRESSIONAL-EXECUTIVE-NONGOVERNMENT organizations led by Go Organic! Philippines called on lawmakers yesterday to fast-track the passage of a bill seeking to promote organic farming.

Ramon agrarian reform undersecretary Atty. Efren Manrique, lead convenor of Go Organic! Philippines, said in a statement that the passage of an organic farming or organic agriculture bill would institutionalize farming support for organic farming and mandate proper administrative bodies to oversee the implementation of programs as part of the government's commitment to sustainable agriculture.

Go Organic! Philippines is leading the implementation of the Department of Agriculture (DA) and Bureau of Soils and Water Management (BSWM) program called Organic WILDS (Support Program Phase 1, which aims to promote organic farming.

Led by the Philippine Rural Reconstruction Movement (PRRM) and La Liga Policy Institute (LLPI), Go Organic! Philippines is aggressively promoting organic farming in seven cities and municipalities in Luzon.

WILDS or Fertilizer, Irrigation and other rural infrastructure like farm-to-market roads, Education and extension work, Loans, Dryers and Seeds is the current facilities, and Seeds is the DSS team thrust to achieve the country's rice self-sufficiency target.

One of the bills that were filed in the House of Representatives is House bill No. 3484 filed by Rep. Rufus Rodriguez, which calls for the promotion of Bio Organic Fertilizer to help the Philippine farmers.

House Bill No. 3125 filed by Rep. Gilbert Vidago, meanwhile, calls for the use of an "Ecodebit" and the creation of an organic agriculture committee that will establish the procedure for the application for the right to use issue "Ecodebit" authorizations.

Meanwhile, House Bill No. 4,656 filed by Rep. Edgar M. Chatto calls for the creation of an Organic Farming Commission.

House Bill No. 4746, meanwhile, calls for the Production of Organically Produced Foods through the establishment of a National Standard Production for Organically Produced Products.

PAL copes with high costs, meets passenger load goal

By Dante L. Lucas

AROUND THE WORLD, THE AIRLINE INdustry is reeling from the twin blows dealt to it by the sharp rise—followed by the sharp drop—in crude oil prices, and the global economic crisis that unfolded in the latter part of last year.

Philippine Airlines, the nation's largest carrier, was no exception as it grappled with the effects of higher fuel costs and greater competition at home and abroad that squeezed its margins.

Despite this, PAL president and CEO Jaime J. Bautista yesterday said the Lucio Tan-owned airline had managed to surpass its passenger traffic target for 2008, with over six weeks left in the current fiscal year.

"We have flown more than 7 million passengers for this year already," he said in an interview, noting that the target was 7.3 million.

At this rate, the growth in PAL's passenger load is a significant jump from the 6.9 million posted in its previous fiscal year.

According to Bautista, the airline's strong performance can be attributed to the innovative cost-control measures implemented last year, along with marketing efforts aimed at recapturing the market for price-conscious flyers.

Once dismissed by its competitors as a lumbering dinosaur, PAL has fought back with programs that allow the market low fares and quality service.

One such offering is its "Econo Light" program which is meant to compete directly with the "zero fare" promos of its competitors, while offering the superior amenities of a standard PAL plane—like wider legroom between rows and more comfortable seats.

"It's a low-cost product," Bautista said, explaining that the number of Econo Light seats on any given flight depends on the number of regular paying passenger bookings. Seats that are not sold by a certain cut off date are made available to budget flyers.

"We manage our revenues based on demand," he said. "If the demand is low for that particular flight, we add more [Econo Light] seats. Instead of flying with empty seats, you actually end up generating more revenue."

On top of this, PAL also made inroads in the domestic market with the launch of its PAL Express brand last year, which capitalized on the twin fronts of quality service and low cost.

"For PAL Express, we're doing very well in 10 destinations," Bautista said. "The [passenger] loads are quite encouraging."

Among the routes that are performing well for the sub-brand are those from Manila to Caticlan, Tuguegarao, Virac, Catarman, and San Jose, Oriental Mindoro, as well as those served by PAL Express' Mactan-Cebu hub.

"We control the market share on those routes," he said. "We're No. 1."

According to Bautista, these programs have helped the airline weather what has proven to be one of the toughest years since it was privatized in the early 1990s.

For the fiscal year ending in March 31, 2009, PAL expects to report its first net loss in five years, paid-y due to the whiplash effect of the spike and rapid decline in fuel prices.

Bautista said the airline locked in fuel costs last year at various points from $50 to $90 per barrel for supplies until 2010—the same phenomenon that affected carriers like Japan Air Lines, Cathay Pacific and Singapore Airlines. During this period, crude oil prices rose as high as $147 per barrel and analysts accordingly expected the airline to suffer huge losses committed to expensive fuel.

Bautista said PAL is slowly unwinding these hedge contracts, having already unwound "a few hundred thousand barrels" worth of fuel supplies over the past months.

For this year, PAL will take delivery of six Boeing 737 twin-engined, wide-body jets for its long-haul operations. A second B777 originally slated for delivery in late 2009 has been pushed back to early 2010 due to production delays caused by the Boeing strike late last year. But's aircraft will be acquired on operating lease, while the second four B777 will be bought, with deliveries expected by late 2010 and early 2011.

The six B777s will boost PAL's 47-aircraft strong fleet, which includes five Boeing 747s, four Airbus A340s, eight A330s, 22 A320s and eight Bombardier Q400s.

For now, Bautista said the airline has still not felt the effects of the expected slowdown in air travel, since its forward bookings are still strong.

"We haven't felt the decline yet," he said. "Load factor is still at the high 70s, although we increased capacity."

Going forward, Bautista said the key to surviving the crisis will be aiming revenues while keeping a tight lid on costs.

"We're doing both, and we're doing relatively well because of these efforts," he said.

METRO PACIFIC INVESTMENTS

METRO PACIFIC INVESTMENTS CORPORATION

NOTICE OF SPECIAL MEETING OF STOCKHOLDERS

Please be advised that a Special Meeting of the stockholders of METRO PACIFIC INVESTMENTS CORPORATION (the "Company") will be held on Friday, the 20th day of February 2009, 11:00 a.m. at The Tower Club, 33rd Floor Philam Life Towers, 8767 Paseo de Roxas, Makati City, for the following purposes:

1. To ratify the Resolution of the Board of Directors approving the issuance of Php 110,491 new common shares ("New MPI Shares") from the current unissued capital stock of the Company in favor of LAWL Phil. Ltd. ("LAWL") at the price of approximately PHP2.57 per share to fund the acquisition by the Company of additional interests in Maynilad Water Company, Inc. ("Maynilad"); and, following the issuance of such New MPI Shares, the listing of these new shares issued to LAWL and/or its designated nominees in the Philippine Stock Exchange;

2. To confirm and approve the proposal of the Board of Directors to dispose of the Company's shareholdings in Landco Pacific Corporation upon terms and conditions to be approved by the Company's Board of Directors, in accordance with the requirements of the Philippine Stock Exchange;

3. To ratify the Resolution of the Board of Directors approving the amendments to the existing Executive Stock Option Plan of the Company ("Plan"), specifically (i) the refreshment of the number of Options that may be granted, either initially or from time to time, under the Plan, to take into account the increases in the capital stock of the Company or other changes to its capital structure which has either been approved by the shareholders and implemented, is currently in process, or which may potentially be approved or implemented in the future; and (ii) the requirement for the Company to comply with relevant corporate approvals and regulations applicable to the Company's parent company.

The Board of Directors has fixed the close of business on the 16th day of January 2009 as the record date for the determination of stockholders entitled to notice of and to vote at the Special Stockholders' Meeting.

Very truly yours,

ANTONIO A. PICAZO
Corporate Secretary
Makati City

E-mail: jar_science_health@inquirer.com.ph
Editor Cesar D. Hangaway

SCIENCE/HEALTH

Organic farm provides lagundi, sambong for local pharma

By Tonie R. Salazar

GOD'S MEDICINE CABINET is how farmers describe a 43-hectare organic farm in this sleepy town of Sta. Rosa in Nueva Ecija.

Lorente Agri-Corp., a member of the Organic Producers Trade Association of the Philippines and to which this large tract of land belongs, has been supplying lagundi and sambong leaves to Emcrad Laboratories for almost 14 years.

The farm has been certified organic by the Organic Certification Center of the Philippines, an independent certifying agency. The Department of Agriculture's Bio Organic Farming Initiative to the Philippines (farmer category) was given to the farm in 2008.

Emcrad Lab, LAC's parent company, is a well-known 63-year-old Filipino-owned firm, which recently won aggressive ads/TV commercials and billboards of its cough medicine 'Ascof' and 'Bioflorel. Among its other popular products are Betadine and Potato Tea.

Emcrad Lab gained further recognition after it won Silver Awards at the 20th International Exhibition of Inventions, New Techniques and Products in Geneva, Switzerland in 1997 for its pioneering herbal drugs such as Ascof (Lagundi) and Bioflorel (Sambong) tablets.

The LAC farm, which uses organic methods devoid of pesticides and synthetic chemicals, used to be dry, unlivable ground. LAC president Guillermo Lorente said 'unsuitable' called it 'Tigang sinampa (cursed land)' because of the arid and poor soil texture. The land also grew weeds—cogon and talahib (cull grass)—which indicated the soil's high acid content.

When the farmers discovered a swampy pool beside the LAC farm, and found that it was fed by water sourced from a spring, LAC staff decided to transform it into a reservoir. It was used to irrigate the farm. Since then, this river has become a source of clean water for the farm. It has also enabled the LAC farm to undergo a gradual transformation and development as an organic farm.

"We are also sharing our organic farming practices with the local government units (LGUs) and neighboring farms. We train them, and we are planning to expand further their OCCP (Organic Certification Center of the Philippines) certification so we can have the same standard," Lorente said.

Helping farmers earn more

Aside from contributing the use of clean soils in the surrounding areas of the LAC farm and generating more farming jobs, the farm could also help neighboring farmers earn more, as well, by enabling them to supply additional organic vegetables to LAC. Lorente admitted that at times the farm suffered low yields, the tradeoff to adhering to organic farming methods.

Among LAC's organic and environment-friendly practices are composting and vermiculture. It has developed a lot numbering systems that regularly monitors soil and plant condition parameters.

LAC farm's preprocessing facility found within the farm, conforms to cGMP (current Good Manufacturing Practices) standards. Lorente explained that the mentioned preprocessing methods and established quality control systems also had to comply with the Bureau of Food and Drug regulations. Emcrad Laboratories validates the quality control results.

The LAC farm's preprocessing facility is supervised by one licensed pharmacist.

The methods the fresh leaves undergo include washing and spin-drying, oven drying at low temperatures, milling, sterilization and packaging. Lorente stressed that no chemicals were used for washing.

Equipment were custom-made by the facility staff to "mechanize the system" and "ensure consistency of the processes." The leaves are cleaned using ozonated water instead of using chemicals such as chlorine.

During the leaves' sedimentation and sand filtration processes, the trapped sediments from the washed leaves, which would normally be considered useless, are kept in containers for a year and made into compost. At the same time, the used liquid is poured back to the farm to nourish the plants.

From 'cursed' to 'blessed'

Inocel said the LAC farm is now called a "blessed land."

Antonia B. Miculob, 44, LAC harvesters-turned-coordinator of the Fourth Generation Farmers' Coop, said that she's "blessed" to be working in an organic farm for five years. "Dasur ako (work is the sun rarely get sick," she said in Filipino.

Miculob, who treated her four children, and other land-less farmers with the medicinal products of the farm, like Emcrad's Ascorice, she said, are the lemon verbaine, okra, kangkong, lanzones and sampaloc tops, the sampaloc fruit, and eggplant.

She gets her vegetables at nearly no cost, as huge discounts are given to workers.

"My children rarely get sick ever since I started working here. He just had only a stubborn burn, and they cure good," Miculob described.

Cirilo Colonia, 39, has been working with LAC for eight years as a land tiller. With five kids ranging from 3 to 13 years old, Colonia said the staple food at home have been okra, ape, kalabasa, sinapalaya, petsay and fish that have made him and his blood strong.

Part of LAC's mission is to promote healthcare by producing organically grown medicinal herbal raw materials and agricultural products.

The company's registered office is located at 441 Lawayway Sta. Rosa, Nueva Ecija.

Aside from supplying the raw materials for parent company Emcrad Lab's products, LAC also supplies organic vegetables to various establishments in Metro Manila, particularly to SM Supermarket in Megamall and North Edsa.

DEVOID of pesticides, fruit Lagundi leaves find their way to the drug stores.

Bicentennial Man

DISCOVER

Marnie Symms Ballon

CHARLES DARWIN, THE British naturalist who proposed the theory of evolution via natural selection, would have been 200 on Feb. 12. To mark the date, Darwin devotees planned over 400 events in nearly 60 countries to celebrate his life and work.

Darwin is best known for writing "The Origin of the Species," which was published 150 years ago and celebrates its own 150th anniversary later this year. Most people likely think of the book, and the idea of evolution, through a phrase often used to describe natural selection: survival of the fittest.

Consider the finches that Darwin studied in the Galápagos Islands off the South American coast as a young man. Some birds had larger, pointed beaks to extract food from cactus flowers while birds with short, hard beaks were able to eat the seeds on the ground.

Chance of survival

When it comes to judging prospective mates, many studies show the females tend to favor the males that will give the most generation a better chance of survival to ensure the continuity of the species. Since a shorter-beaked finch in the cactus flower-eating species would get less food than his longer-beaked forebears, for example, female finches would consider the genes to fit in pairs on to the next generation and would probably not pick him for a mate.

But evolution doesn't just involve natural selection. A research study led by Marlene Pelabon of Sweden's Uppsala University suggests sexual selection isn't the only process driving evolution.

In an article published Jan. 27 in the online journal PLoS Biology, Pelabon and his colleagues compared the wild Columbian ground squirrels with those in captive and manage gateways to identify human genes that evolve more rapidly than others, taking a path separate from natural selection. Instead of only passing on genes that promote one's chances of survival, the last wedding genes let some genetic mutations—not all of which might be considered desirable—through to the next generation.

In his mentioned letter in his book, Darwin wondered if the finches on the islands were all descended from a common ancestor and had adapted over time to their specific environments. Several species are undergoing similar evolutions today as they adapt to changing conditions to their habitats.

In recent years there have been reports of a few female sharks and Komodo dragons becoming pregnant without any genetic contribution from a male of the species. Researchers say they expect to see more cases of parthenogenesis over the next few years, though they're still not quite sure what triggers the animal's ability to suddenly become a single parent.

Another study from Uppsala University researchers, however, proposes an explanation for the evolution of the colors and patterns in the skins of domesticated pigs compared to their wild kin.

Animal breeding scientists from Uppsala University say that Gloria Agricultural Enterprises in Indonesia selected wild boars and domesticated pigs in Europe and Asia to find out how their coat colors became so varied. One theory was that the pig coats varied changing when the animals were farmed because they didn't need to be camouflaged in the wild anymore.

Settles the debate

"Our study settles the debate by showing that the pattern is due to unintentional selection by humans," said the study lead author, Leif Andersson of Uppsala University, in a statement.

According to the researchers, this example of evolution at the molecular level might have been begun by farmers who wanted to distinguish their livestock from the wild boars when the pigs were wandering away from the farmlands.

Andersson and his colleagues also proposed a second, and perhaps simpler, explanation: the variations in the pigs' coats such as stripes or dots appealed to the farmers who then chose to selectively breed for the characteristics.

The article was published Jan. 16 in the online journal PLoS Genetics.

E-mail the author at mballon@inquirer.com.

The PCP and the Filipino internist

MEDICAL FILES

Rafael Castillo, M.D.

MANY COMPLAIN THAT THE PRACtice of medicine is getting to be more complicated than it used to be decades ago. We've reached the point of super-specialization such that there can be several types of specialties for just one clinical organ.

If one has a heart problem, he/she may need to see a general heart specialist called a general cardiologist, then another heart specialist called an electrophysiologist for one's abnormal heart beat or arrhythmia, and another heart specialist called an invasive cardiologist for opening the clogs in one's heart arteries. Problems in one's bronchia or liver will likewise need one to different types of liver specialties.

Attending physicians

Time was when a patient would only have to see one type of doctor for all the medical problems that he/she has. Nowadays, one may have a long list of attending physicians, many enough to form a personal club for the patient. For some patients, it's a status symbol how many specialists and type of specialties one consults with regularly.

In the last three decades, medical information has literally exploded. Even specialties just can't seem to catch up and cope with the volume of new information coming in a deluge via medical journals, scientific conventions and even through the Internet.

It's sometimes unusual that as a physician learns more about the science of medicine, he/she realizes there is so much more that he/she doesn't know. Hence, when one specializes in one field, instead of gaining confidence with the knowledge and skills he/she has accumulated, the modern specialist who has supersubspecialized—not just on one organ system—but sometimes on just one part of the organ, now feels insecure to manage medical problems—no matter how minor they are—in other organs.

This is the role of the Philippine College of Physicians, the national organization of some 7,000 internists in the country. It supports its members to constantly hone and update their skills and knowledge as general internists and not as supersubspecialists.

General internists are doctors who have trained in internal medicine. They are the doctors patients almost for life—from the time they get to be teenagers through old age. To be a general internist, a graduate of medicine trains for another three years to focus on the prevention and treatment of adult illnesses, specifically in those internal organs: the lungs, heart, liver, pancreas and biliary tract, bowels, kidneys, thyroid and other glandular organs.

Now a vanishing breed

Many of the great physicians in our country's medical history were general internists. Sadly, this is now a diminishing, if not a vanishing breed. Many general internists would prefer to continue the subspecialization or be subspecialists in the individual organs. In the process, since the tendency is to hone on just one organ, they tend to forget what they have trained for as a general internist.

Once a year, the PCP gathers its members here in several cities to update them on all the scientific breakthroughs related to internal medicine during the previous and current year. During the convention, the members—many of whom are already specialists in specific organ systems—are reminded that first and foremost, they are internists, and they should not refer a patient to all sorts of specialists if they have medical problems which internists can competently attend to.

This is the downside of super-specialization. Majority of one's medical problems can actually be handled by a general internist. General healthcare quality would improve instead of improving. Because of the referral to other specialists which may not be complied with by the patient immediately, there will be delay in the treatment of one's medical problems. The increase in the cost of medical, because of more consultation fees, ancillary services and more on the average family's budget.

Patients can save a lot of money on medical consultation fees by recruiting their healthcare to a good general internist, who is a diplomate in internal medicine, an accredited member of the PCP, and not a specialist in one specific organ. The patient can also avoid the "three evil" of their healthcare, which should be adequate for most of their health problems.

These general internists are more familiar with the patients' health and personal histories, including drug allergies and histories of adverse drug interactions. Hence, they would be in a better position to treat them.

Network of specialists

For complicated cases, internists usually have a network of specialists they can refer the patient to, but they should remain as the main attending physician and can even nominate suggestions of the specialists if the general internist believes that it may not suit the patient well, knowing his/her medical history better.

This year, the PCP's 39th annual convention will be held on May 1-4 at the SMX Convention Center with the theme "PCP: Partnership, Competence, Professionalism." The annual PCP convention is a must-attend for the competent and diligent general internist. For those interested in the convention or those who desire the PCP, they may call the secretariat at 911-2252.

May the tribe of the true general internist increase.

Thermal comfort

GREEN ARCHITRENDS

Amando ale Jesus

WE ARE CONSTANTLY EVALUATING our surroundings and finding ways to achieve thermal comfort.

When we get up in the morning, we check the weather and dress appropriately before going to work. We make sure our air conditioner is in good shape before we drive out. And when we reach our office we turn on the air conditioner or electric fan to ensure good working conditions.

We never travel abroad without checking if we should bring heavy or light clothes. Thermal comfort is every body's concern, whether you are in a temperate country or in a hot humid country like the Philippines.

What is thermal comfort?

Thermal comfort is the sensation of physical well-being in relation to body heat loss to the surroundings.

Our internal body temperature is constant at 36.5°-37°C. We have to release body heat from involuntary (human like metabolism, blood circulation and voluntary factors like muscular activity, shaking and location, in order to maintain a stable internal temperature. There is continuous exchange of heat between the human body and its surroundings.

When summer comes we will say goodbye to the very pleasant 30°C average temperature. We will become dependent on the electric fan and air conditioning to regulate sweating caused by the heat exchange between the human body and the thermal environment. We will be addressing the issue of thermal comfort. Comfort depends on age, gender, culture and who foots the bill.

4 physical ways

To improve the thermal comfort levels in a room we must understand how the body relates to its surroundings.

The heat exchange between the body and its surroundings takes place in four physical ways: conduction, convection, long-wave radiation and evaporation.

• Conduction. This is the transmission of heat from materials in contact with the skin. For example, it is not advisable to wear wool and heavy clothing in hot weather; it is also important to protect the proper materials, coverings and finishes in winter climates.

• Convection. This is the exchange of body heat with ambient air, depending on the difference in temperature between the body and the air and also air movement.

Ambient temperature is comfortable at 26°C. Window openings allow air exchange and are recommended to be not less than one-tenth of floor area, and one-third of wall area. Operable windows are preferable to fixed glass windows. Buildings and homes are comfortable when planned and designed according to topography and wind direction.

When there are two openings at different levels of a house or building, and there is a temperature difference between these two levels, the stack effect occurs. That is the tendency of warm air to rise and go out through the opening in the higher level. The hot air will be replaced by cool air entering through the lower openings.

Natural night ventilation should be allowed indoors to reduce air temperature during hot weather.

• Long-wave radiation. This is the heat transfer between the human body and the surrounding internal surfaces like the walls, ceiling and floors. The difference in temperature between the skin and the surfaces enclosing the body highly affect thermal comfort. Heat from the ceiling is expected to affect us more than heat from walls. Ceiling height and thermal property of ceiling and wall materials are therefore important considerations in designing homes and buildings.

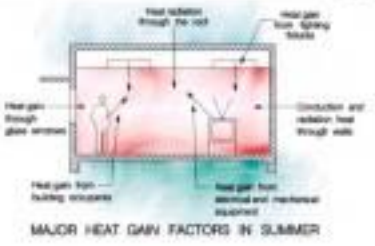
Poorly insulated buildings have hot internal surfaces. Light-colored paint on external walls is recommended in hot climate because it will reflect solar radiation.

Green roofs, climbing plants and koi ponds reduce temperature of roofs and walls and internal surfaces. Sun shades and shutters reduce sunlight penetration.

• Evaporation. This occurs when the temperature of surrounding air and surfaces is above 25°C. The body loses heat through evaporation or perspiration depending on clothing worn, temperature, relative humidity and air movement. Humans normally lose one liter of water per day due to perspiration and respiration, and it takes heat from the body and its surroundings to evaporate it. Relative humidity or the amount of moisture in the air as percentage of the maximum moisture the air can contain at a certain temperature and pressure, affects heat loss by evaporation. If the surrounding air has higher temperature than the skin, the cooling effect of evaporation is not possible even if relative humidity is below 100 percent. Air speed does not decrease the temperature but causes a cooling sensation through heat loss by convection and increased evaporation.

Steps to cool the air will help maintain a sense of well-being in this time of crisis.

For comments or inquiries, email amandoalejesus@gmail.com.



MAJOR HEAT GAIN FACTORS IN SUMMER

THE NEW Eastwood Mall heightens the urban living experience at Eastwood LeGrand Tower 2.

Eastwood LeGrand 2 offers great shopping delights

A REFRESHING shopping and dining experience awaits at the new Eastwood Mall.

INVESTORS may check out this hotel-but-one-bedroom loft residence at the grand Eastwood showroom.

ECONOMISTS often say that shops can make or break a neighborhood. More than just the energy that fuels a community's microeconomy, they help define the area's character and livability, shape daily commute routines by fulfilling immediate needs. They also give a neighborhood its own special aura that adds to the place's character.

Such is the effect that the new Eastwood Mall is expected to have on Eastwood City. The latest commercial undertaking from Megaworld Corp., the country's leading developer of integrated condominium, the luxurious Eastwood Mall is seen as an unparalleled venture that will enhance the quality of life of residents living in this upscale, tower block community, including privileged residents of the 120-story Eastwood LeGrand Tower 2, the first Eastwood project to boast loft residences for rent.

"The new Eastwood Mall is a welcome addition to the ever-growing Eastwood City community. This heightens the New York-style shopping and dining experience that current Eastwood City residents and workers now enjoy. Eastwood LeGrand 2 residents will similarly enjoy the same urban experience when they become part of our community," Eastwood Property Holdings Inc. SVP for Marketing and project head John Nederlind shared.

Restaurants, cafés

Take for instance the many restaurants and cafés soon to open along Eastwood Mall's second level, paired-level boulevard-type spaces. From Italian favorites such as Le Thai and Illi Ristorante to continental establishments such as The Old Vine and Rhubarb, these establishments are expected to boost the area's cool factor as a veritable and diverse dining destination.

Eastwood Mall is also seen to entertain Eastwood City as a fashion haven. A score of high-end clothing shops are expected to open at here opened in the area, including London High Street retail giants such as Topshop, Mango and Marks & Spencer's as well as latest of the glam set such as Aldo, Maldita, Stradivarius and a string of outlets from stores. Specialties like Cabin Kitten, Rosario Cole and Lacoste.

However, Eastwood Mall does not only provide a dose of great retail therapy for fashionistas but also to the young families that will soon move in to Eastwood LeGrand 2. Dozens of shops that specialize in children's clothing and footwear in Prelovable, Jump, Flowhorn Kids, Oshkosh BGosh and Babyland.

Family enjoyment

Young moms eager to develop their magic in the kitchen will be delighted to find that there is a branch of Raffles Kitchen Model and a satellite edutainment facility of Center for Culinary Arts. For dads, there is the DIY shop to do the quick fixes at home while home goodgrocery and accessories run by resident of 21 Sunny Condos. Stunning and Automatic Genius.

Family members meanwhile can enjoy themselves at Manila's largest Timezone, watch the latest Hollywood hits in style at the Eastwood Elite Cinemas, pick up visiting relatives tollfree at the adjacent Richmonde Hotel or simply take a leisurely walk through the music-filled hallways provided by courtesies mall attendants in sharp suits.

Eastwood Mall and the shopping, selection and convenience it promises to Eastwood residents will be another reason to avail of one of Eastwood's coveted 25 luxurious split-level condominiums. With units with commanding views of the city surroundings living spaces, fashionable interiors, exclusive access to a floor full of luxurious leisure amenities, Eastwood LeGrand 2 truly brings the purchasing power of your pesos to new heights.

To experience the cosmopolitan city lifestyle at Eastwood LeGrand 2, visit the showroom at Eastwood City's posh Orchard Road or check out www.eastwood-properties.com.

Experts estimate . . .

From page B4

"This is also market demand driven as Filipinos take almost 12 years to fully save enough to invest in a new home or property. The boat cycle is mirrored in by irregularities in the economic environment like the Thai Baht crisis bursting in 1997 and the recent US 'mugalanan.' However, Filipinos have learned to save after the 1997 crisis, enough to ride them over today," Dalampasan said.

Nothing wrong

Mahidlac sees nothing wrong with feng shui or its practice.

"It is not a superstition, cult or religion. In fact, its principles are practical and only aim to enhance the flow of energy. You will also find most of its principles based on common sense."

He cited as an example a door that, according to feng shui, should open inward. "In China, no where it snows in some parts, just imagine if there is a snow buildup on your front door, how can you open it if you have to push it outward? Now, feng shui adapts that by saying that opening a door inward welcomes good luck."

Improving the 'imperfect'

Mahidlac sees nothing wrong with feng shui or its practice.

"There are no perfect properties in absorbing the positive 'chi.' It is in this aspect that feng shui masters play an important role. They are resource persons who help improve the flow of positive energy to a particular space either by simply rearranging the orientation of the different components of the house, or moving the pieces of furniture or by placing charms and ornaments believed to attract good fortune."

Mahidlac said, however, that recently, feng shui has become overly commercialized and "generalized" with other conflicting interpretations.

He pointed to the morning sun as an example. The morning sun has traditionally been the preferred orientation as it is believed a household is lucky if the rising sun faces its front door.

"This would mean the afternoon sun is considered unlucky. However, if you buy a property on Roxas Boulevard, the units facing the sunset pick up the highest price. The reality is that each individual has a different feng shui based on the date and time of their birth and considering with authentic master would be an ideal guide. But at the end of the day, it is you before the masters," Mahidlac said.

Real ones have no office

Dalampasan observed that the demand for feng shui has grown exponentially, but that there are only eight authentic feng shui experts in the country, with some who have just died recently, reducing their number further.

Asked how to separate a fake from a genuine feng shui expert, Dalampasan replied: "A real expert has no office. He is hands-on in the field and just mobile telecommuting."

"Feng shui is an ancient science. It cannot be a tabletop reading like how a fortune teller or tarot card reader does. Because of frivolous customers and pretenders, rich-looking properties like unconditional lieutenants, and shows you a store of conditioned marketing body charms to dispose of at your expense."

He also warned people in be wary of so-called "experts" asking for exorbitant prices for massages for their services.

"I have seen top executives lose P800,000 after an 'expert' claiming to be a popular TV host's feng shui consultant charge her that much."

Dalampasan offers this advice: Get a copy of the reference book "The Unknown Story of Feng Shui." The book, he claims, would provide the do and don'ts of feng shui principles and applications. It is available at Popular Bookstore on Timog Street, Quezon City and at Treasures at the Strang Mall.

BORED PILING WORKS COMPLETED

Federal Land continues to make its mark in the Makati area with Trio Oriental Place. With the bored piling works recently completed, full construction of the 33 storey, high-rise residences on Dela Chica Roxas has started. It is accessible at Sen. Gil Puyat Avenue, Amorsolo Street and Pasay Road with schools, offices and other commercial establishments within the area. Soon enough, residents of The Orient Suites will enjoy their investments as well as the perks of urban convenience. Visit The Oriental Place Showroom at the ground floor of Oriental Garden Makati, Dela Chica Roxas Avenue corner Export Avenue, Makati or call 719-1000.

MANOSA WORK INCLUDED IN KEN YEANG'S BOOK

The design done by architect Francisco "Bobby" Manosa on the Santal Suite in Pearl Farm Resort was recently chosen to be included in the latest book by world-renowned Malaysian architect Ken Yeang, known for his passion for energy conservation and concern for architecture's environmental impact. Manosa's work was one of those cited for having the "Best Bio-Climatic Façades" and was chosen from over 400 entries from around the world.

Manosa is the only architect from the Philippines to be included in the book. He is a proponent of green architecture for the past 40 years long before it became a trend.

Manosa flew to Venice, Italy for a special ceremony attended by Yeang and the other architects whose works are included in the book set to come out this year.

PROPERTY

Edited by Cesar D. Manguerang

Experts estimate feng shui used in 90% of RP businesses

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ACRYL COAT
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By Yuen R. Salazar

UP TO 90 PERCENT of real estate industry players and Filipino property buyers consult the ancient energy-channeling practice of feng shui.

This was recently estimated by a property player and a feng shui expert.

"I believe (it is practiced) by more than 60 percent. Most of our members are developers and sellers who know very well that their buyers would like to have a 'lucky house,'" said Alejandro S. Mallabo, president of the National Real Estate Association.

"Thus, being in a market-driven industry, they have no choice but to make sure that their projects conform to the guidelines of feng shui. In fact, a lot of buyers and property owners just observe and meticulously follow the commanding why they are doing it. Somehow they want to be 'in,'" he added.

Feng shui expert Adele Dalumpines said, "In my educated estimate, the prevalence of feng shui among Filipino property consumers here and abroad is 80.8 percent." And in true feng shui fashion, he added, "That's a lucky figure."

Dalumpines revealed to Inquirer Property that his clients ranged "from a squatters' area and east coast resort to the conglomerate here and abroad." His website panaypay.com enumerates the benefits of this expert's work: property buyers from shoe business, commercial establishments, doctors and even nurses based abroad who own investments in London, New York, California and New Jersey.

Taken seriously

Feng shui is being taken seriously by Philippine property players, according to Mallabo, who has been with the real estate industry for 20 years specializing in high-end sales and marketing.

It's no laughing matter "especially for those in the high-end market, whom we all know is predominantly Chinese. You will also notice that even western architects consult feng shui masters if they are doing projects here, in Hong Kong or China," Mallabo said.

He added that "most, if not all, high-end developers hire the services of not just any feng shui master but those with big names and 'marketable' ones. You will even find their names and faces in the (property) brochures endorsing the projects."

Popular after '97 crisis

Dalumpines explained that property players' use of taking feng shui seriously after the 1997 Asian financial crisis.

"In 1998, the No. 1 effect of feng shui was the mildew of Multo-cultong... Soup Stone, do—with his infamous quote: 'I believe in feng shui, just do not ask me how to spell it!'" Dalumpines said.

In a more serious tone, however, Dalumpines cautioned that feng shui is also plagued by its own set of hypes and myths. He cited as an example the location of Southeast Asian casinos in relation to how it would handle the latest global financial downturn.

Resilient Asia will be less hit by the global recession not because it is in the forefront, but because it has learned to put in place policies since 1997 to secure their economies from future crises.

Dalumpines said the Philippine real estate sector would not be hit by financial woes this year because the country has traditionally followed a 12-year boom/bust cycle.

"From the end of World War II, the savings and investment patterns of the top 3 percent of the movers and shakers of the property market have been noted to have a savings pattern of at least a decade to a dozen years before they develop new projects whereby supply creates its own demand," Dalumpines said.

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GLOBE ASIATIQUE

2bU LIFESTYLE
Editor: Thelma Sioson San Juan
Layout and Color: Pam Pascua

THE YOUTUBE stars take the stage.

All roads lead to Boyce Avenue

By Penelope Evidente

WITH 75 MILLION VIEWS AND counting of their songs on YouTube and MySpace accounts alone, the Boyce Avenue is an unqualified success. Here Boyce is the Philippines for a series of concerts at the SM Supermalls across the country.

The Morrison brothers—lead singers and guitarists Alejandro, guitarist Robert, bassist Daniel, and friend Stephen Hattler on drums and percussion—are famous for doing both cover songs such as "Bleeding Love," "No Air," "Wish You" and "Umbrella" and many others with musical twists that validate their accounts' reach and alternative rock classic.

"I guess I would describe it as authentic and vivid," said eldest brother Daniel, speaking of their one-on-one musical route to stardom via the Internet. "It's vital in the years that it spread very quickly, in the course of the year we went from being a local band to being an international band."

"It's the way of the future," added Alejandro.

Not just covers

Almost every YouTube video they've posted has generated three-

ALSO ON C2

All Roads Lead to Boyce Avenue

From page 01

sands of responses. The "Epiphany" video now has 10,541 replies, and "Viva La Vida" 16,171.

The expressions of admiration come in different languages and emoticons.

"You deserve to be famous," praised Ahmedzaide1374. "Please do something like this," said sally_sally_7, "so the advice from Jasmine Marshall, Nikki Bella and others of popular songs." I have to admit, the majority of your versions sound better than the originals," said springsteps.

The band's popularity outside the Net has brought them to the next big thing: The launch of their original album, "All You've Meant To Be."

"We kind of have our own style already before we did the cover songs," said youngest brother Alejandro. He said he gets his inspirations purely work from life experiences.

"That's what comes easiest for me. It just kinda come down and feels the most natural," he added. "So far, we are still doing everything by ourselves. We are our own record label. We record the music ourselves, we produce our music ourselves."

"However, we decided that for getting the album out in the Philippines, we should partner with Universal MCA for distribution, since they know how to get the word out to the Filipino people."

"But we want our fans to know that we still make all our creative decisions and that we're still dedicated to the first fans page and meeting our fans online," Alejandro clarified.

'Meant to-do'

The Maverick brothers came out in Boyce Avenue 2 years ago, although they have been playing since their high school days. They took a hiatus when Daniel attended—and graduated from—Harvard Law School and Julian finished architecture at the University of Florida.

"I think what's great about this band and the way we've done it is that we're acting what we've learned...Like, Daniel's taken care almost all of our legal work, while I did the design of the CD," said Julian.

"I don't regret the transition at all. This is what I feel we're meant to do," added Daniel.

Stephen came in through a mutual friend of Daniel. He then introduced the Maverick brothers to different studios across Florida.

"When we met Steve, he took us to a new and different level. He added the drums, and then's how we were able to do full band shows," said Alejandro.

"He was living in a different city but he moved to where we lived just for us to be together. That's when things really took off, when he was really committed to help us out," said Julian.

Free concert

The Philippines is lucky to spend the Valentine season with the boys of Boyce Avenue. And the best part is: It's free.

On Feb. 13, they appear at the Atrium, SM City Cebu; Feb. 13, at the Seaside Boulevard of SM Mall of Asia. Today, Feb. 14, they will be at the atrium of SM North The Block at 2 p.m. and on Feb. 15, they will be at the Mega atrium of SM Megamall, 7:30 p.m.

When asked if someone back at home might be waiting for them, Daniel and Julian said they are both married. Meanwhile, all the single ladies out there—you have a chance to line up for Alejandro and Stephen's attention.

"The international aspect of what we get to do is just amazing. To be able to read all the messages from Filipino fans and to know that we're finally going to see them and they are going to see us...that means to us, ally special to us," concluded Alejandro.

Watch out for these Pinays

Nina Mark M. Sabilo
200 Correspondent

IT WASN'T SO LONG AGO when singer Charice Pempengco appeared on "The Ellen DeGeneres Show" and wowed everyone with her impressive performance.

Soon after that, other appearances followed for Charice, from a gracing on "The Oprah Show" to a show that was part of the inauguration festivities of US President Barack Obama.

Ellen must really love Filipinos, because in a recent episode of her show, she showed a video clip of two new Filipino YouTube sensations. Let's hope they will be as big—or even bigger—than Charice Pempengco very soon.

The duo is composed of Ate, who incidentally looks Pinay, and Rex, a 10-Ate who resembles a younger Paolo Abdul. Both live in the US, are best friends, and share the same passion for music.

In their YouTube channel, called this so, the duo (better known youtube name: xoxRexRexoxo), you can find around 70 renditions of current popular songs, which they perform in their bedroom. The music style is undoubtedly R&B...most appearent in their covers of songs by Beyonce, Mariah Carey, Jennifer Lopez, Keri Hilson and the like.

But the really impressive covers are the songs originally done by male singers like Ne-yo and Chris Brown. Those tracks include "With You," "Because" and "Every Little Thing She Does Is Magic."

Of the 70 or so cuts, the best are: hands down, the performances of Alicia Keys' "No One," Destiny Kuna's "Rule The Sun" and Jojo's "You Little Too Late."

While rare, solo numbers are also available. We have a version of Christina Aguilera's "The Voice Within" while Rex has a rendition of the same singer's "Hurt."

The girls' singing style and perky personalities (they giggle, make faces and put on fake accents) make them endearing to the many YouTube viewers who click on their videos—some over 50,000 only—and even million views, which is a very impressive feat.

The comments section just confirms how good the two are and how a lot of people see from everywhere are amazed at their talent. Excitement among fans.

After showing a clip of the two singing Beyonce's "If I Were a Boy" on her show, the TV host called them "fantastic," then added this message for the two: "If you're searching right now, please, please come on the show, if you're watching. We have a wonderful backroom. I would love you to come here."

Otherwise, the duo on the Ron YouTube channel, the girls recruited this particular TV episode, complete with giggles and OMGs ("Oh, my God!"). A couple of episodes later, Jessica showed another clip of the duo performing a song from Ne-yo.

It's a safe bet that our two talented "kababayan" will be up on the "Ellen DeGeneres Show" very soon.

E-mail the author at nina.marksabilo@yahoo.com

Rex AND Ate, US-based YouTube singing sensations

Jett Pangan blogs!

By Maggie Gallego

"THE LAST THING YOU want to do after a gig is to listen to music," says Jett Pangan, front man of the ultra-popular band The Dawn. So, after a gig, he goes on-line to unwind.

His latest joy? Blogging.

"I started blogging in 2003," he says. The rocker, who blogs almost everyday ("as long as I have the time"), has always kept a journal, and now he enjoys the convenience of sharing his thoughts and views online. "It's your own space," he explains.

"Everyone in the band is involved. It really has helped us," adds Pangan.

"IT'S my current vacation," says Jett of the Dive Mate program.

For a long time, especially in the '80s, the band preferred the standard analog recording process. Then it learned to use computers to add effects and the like to their work. "You can do so much more now in the recording process," Pangan explains.

Easy program

He uses Microsoft Office One Note for his blogging. The program works exactly like a notebook, with dividers and an easy-finding search system to locate notes written at different time periods or in different chapters. There is even a sound recording option that can be used to record the contents of a meeting. But Pangan uses it to record melodies he comes up with on the fly.

"It's very useful for musicians," he notes.

One Note also helps him blog with much ease. He writes down little notes here and there until these episodes flow straight into the web through the program. "That's what I appreciate about all this," he says. "I'm not a techie by any means, but it makes it easier for me to use all this technology."

Also, "The Internet has really made our relationship with the fans stronger," says Pangan. "Fans are demanding, they want to know more and they want to be kept in the loop."

At the same time, all this technology has allowed The Dawn to write and record their songs instantly. They pass along tracks through e-mail and add more layers or dubs. "It opens up all possibilities," says Pangan with a smile.

Check out his blog on jettpangan.opera.live.com.

VALENTINE PROMO

More iPod touch winners

FOR WEEKS, ZIG AND SHARE asked you to answer this question creatively: Which iPod touch App would you like to enjoy with your significant other and why?

You're impressed us with your creativity...we've been swamped with your e-mails, songs, websites, videos, poems, artworks, photos, stories, picture-taking presentations, even food creations.

And we've been giving away our iPod touch and weekly. Today, because it's Valentine's Day, we're giving away two units of the iPod touch.

If you didn't win our promo but still want to pick up your own iPod touch, please log on to www.ziga.apple.com/ph/buy/home for a detailed listing of resellers.

Winners will be notified through e-mail and should claim their iPod touch from Manila Trains of Green Hills FE with coupon number 6788973. All entries submitted to the promo will be owned by the publication and Apple authorized resellers.

This week's winners:

BLOOM
By Jolcon Mail Sibal

Verse:
On each day that you're not here feels like I'm not complete
Only the memories were left in me
Refrain:
And then I wished that you'll be here
And listen to this song together on Feb. 14
Chorus:
In this BLOOM is where I feel your voice is flowing around my ears
And I know that you are here beside me and we listen to it
Now I know where to go knowing that I can feel you more
And I don't know what to do without this.
Verse:
On each day that you're not here feels like I'm not complete
Only the memories were left in me
Refrain:
And then I wished that you'll be here
And listen to this song together on Feb. 14
Chorus
In this BLOOM is where I feel your voice is flowing around my ears
And I know that you are here beside me and we listen to it
Now I know where to go knowing that I can feel you now
And I don't know what to do without this.
(repeat chorus)

Jolcon Sibal, 20
Silliman University Dumaguete City
View www.jolcon.com/user/id/2112/music/PAPaperXo/end_Moore/ to listen to Jolcon's song.

ANNA Bascuña, 19 University of the Philippines Diliman
Log on to www.youtube.com/watch?v=ePuCBuXCI0 to watch Your Way, her video entry

A chance to
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MILADAY
DIAMOND PROPOSAL by
Automatic
CENTRE
FREE
SONY TOSHIBA

P50 each
McSaver
Meals

CELEBRATE *Love* AT SM MEGAMALL

The music of love fills the SM Megamall with signature performances of top singing talents from the Philippines and the United States just in time for Valentine's Day. While they represent different genres, ranging from classical to pop to rock, they all sing the language of love with their extraordinary style.

Make it a date with your sweetheart on Valentine's Day, February 14 as this Akafellas perform love songs their unique brand of music called the pinoypella at the Mega Atrium at 2:00 PM.

Boyce Avenue, the Florida based band will make a stop at the mall on February 15 at 7:00 PM for a free performance at the Mega Atrium. The group, which consists of three brothers Alejandro, Fabian, and Daniel Manzano and their friend Stephen Hacker with their mellow songs that reflect their strong acoustic roots and constant drive towards a melody and harmony driven rock vibe.

The SM Megamall Events Center, on the other hand, will feature performances of one of the country's top local artists Kyla as she visits the mall on an album tour. How? Or heart on February 27 at 7:30 PM.

Get ready to Pucker Up and leave your kiss marks on the wall in this exciting Valentine's Day promotion with MOR FM 103.5. Have your kiss marks counted, sign them, and win fun freebies on the premises.

Celebrate the greatest love of all - God's love for us - at the newly opened Chapel of the Eucharistic Lord at the Fifth Level of the Mega Atrium on Valentine's Day at 6:30 PM. In line with its 11th Anniversary, the Most Rev. Father Myrin Robert Zafralla will lead in the celebration of Holy Mass. Performances by the world renowned Madrigal Singers, and the Six Priests in the City ensemble consisting of Fr. Ben Jose Jasico, Father Steve Zabala, Father Eric Santos, Father James Nicolana, Father Nestor Sarmiento, and Father Roy Pascual will follow after the Mass.

The season for love is for everyone, and SM Megamall shares love with children with Down Syndrome with a Happy Walk around the mall on February 22 at 7:00 AM.

Celebrate love at SM Megamall!

The Six Priests in the City with Mrs. Feliciano Sy

Boyce Avenue

Catch America's hottest acoustic group live in concert at Mega Atrium, Feb. 15, Sunday, 7:30pm

Akafellas Live in Concert
Feb. 14, 2pm, Mega Atrium
The Philippines' premier acapella vocal group takes the stage with their unplugged and unaccompanied versions of audience's favorite love songs.

11th Anniversary Celebration of the Chapel of the Eucharistic Lord
Feb. 14, 6:30pm
Join us in the ultimate celebration where an Anniversary Mass presided by The Most Reverend Myrin Vergara. Then your spirits will be further uplifted by a concert featuring the world-renowned Philippine Madrigal Singers and the country's most musically gifted men of the cloth - the Six Priests in the City.

MEGAMALL

26 LIFESTYLE

In UP, traditional love still rules

Students in the country's premiere university are not as liberal as you think

By Maria Karen B. Bolaños
University of the Philippines Diliman

WHILE TODAY FOR MANY IS ANTI (Single Awareness Day), don't fret if you're NBSB or NGSB. (No Boyfriend Since Birth or No Girlfriend Since Birth), you are not alone.

In fact, if you are from UP, you are in the majority.

In a recent study done by the UP Communication Research Society about perceptions of, attitudes toward, and practices of romance, to love among UP Diliman students, three out of four students identified themselves as single. Similarly, 76 percent have never been in a relationship, while 36 percent say single but have been in a certain stage.

The rest are in open or exclusive relationships, or engaged.

The survey, which sampled 512 students from 16 colleges within the university, can be generalized for the student population of UP Diliman, though further studies are encouraged in other colleges and universities to

READ IN |

On Sean: Cardigan, P1,099; jeans, P1,299, shirt, P749, all Folded and Hung. Bracelet necklace, P595. Thea Amberand by Thad Pangilinan (09.1687.5186). On Jaime: Knitted cardigan, P799; shirt, P1,99; all Folded and Hung. Ruffled blouse, P1,495. Plaine and Prints. Gladiator sandals, P695. Silver ring, P99; bag, P1,395; all Freeway.

What to wear on Valentine's Day

It's always a nice gesture to dress up once in a while for a special night out

By Bianca Caranzaj
Photos by Cyrus Pangahinan

IF YOUR IDEA OF A DATE outfit is your favorite pair of jeans and an old shirt, you might want to consider a change of clothes on Valentine's Day.

After all, you're not doing your typical after-school date. Your boyfriend or girlfriend might not mind if you showed up in the same old outfit you wear to school every day, but it's always a nice gesture to dress up once in a while for a special night out—a sort of significant push-over asking your significant other for granted.

However, dressing up doesn't mean having to show up to a gown when your date shows up at the door. Keep in mind that you always have to dress for the occasion, so it's always better to ask what sort of activities you'll be up to during the date.

You wouldn't want to wear heels if you're going for a picnic lunch in a park, or wear faded jeans to a fancy dinner.

Here's Zeal's guide on dressing for your special date.

"LIGHT AND EASY"

So you want to keep things simple—Juno Irridescent and a movie with the for you and your date. You want to look good without being overdressed, so pick a dress with a simple cut and interesting details (ruffles, an unusual neckline, etc.) and pair with classic accessories. Don't forget to bring a cardigan to keep you warm during the movie! Guys can go the preppy route and pair a classic polo shirt with jeans and a cardigan or jacket.

"OUT IN THE OPEN"

Planning to go to a Boracay or Subic? Light and easy does it. Girls might want to take advantage of the warm, breezy weather by throwing on a short skirt or pair of shorts, keeping things fun by pairing the shorts with a tank top, vest and brightly colored accessories. Guys, on the other hand, can liven up a basic tee or polo shirt with a colorful graphic tee.

On Sean: Gray graphic tee, P499; multicolor shirt, P349; dark blue skinny jeans; aviator shades, P329; all Folded and Hung. On Jaime: Mustard vest, P195; Stan. White sleeveless top, P395; Freeway. Rose-buttoned shorts, P699, Folded and Hung. Keep on cuffs, P495 each; Thea Amberand by Thad Pangilinan (09.1687.5186).

On Sean: Beige jacket, P1,399; Black pique polo, P999; dark blue skinny jeans; Silver-plated leather watch belt, P249; all Folded and Hung. On Jaime: Purple dress, P1,995; Black patent over-the-knee boots, P450; all Plaine and Prints. Gold bangle and gold-plated black tights, stylist's own.

"SEMI-FORMAL"

There aren't a lot of occasions for college students and couples to wear really formal clothes (i.e. black tie), so you can easy when your date says that you're going to do something fancy for Valentine's.

If you're planning to go to a high-end restaurant or attend a play, your best bet is to wear a mid-length dress paired with tights and heels. (A good alternative to fishnet stockings is patterned tights, which can be hard to pull off but will make you look funky. Just wear your worst's earrings for a classier, more grown-up look. Boys can opt to wear a tailored dinner jacket with a long-sleeved polo, na rin iyo.

On Sean: Jacket, P1,595; vest, P899; red scarf, P229, all Folded and Hung. On Jaime: Polo dress, P1,095; knitted hoodie, P1,195; all Stan. Sleeveless top, P895, Freeway. Horn necklace, P595. Thea Amberand by Thad Pangilinan (09.1687.5186).

"BARKADA DATE"

For Valentine's Day you and your dad/ate (your significant other is part of your barkada, anyway) are ditching the typical date setup for a pandbull-slowdance instead. What do you wear?

Yes, you guys can brush and girlfriend can wear flannel shirts, plaid, knee-length tops with scarves, and perfectly faded jeans paired with comfortable sneakers. Just for Valentine's Day, try wearing matching scarves—it's corny, but the holiday itself is corny, so just go with the flow.

"E-mail the author at bianca.caranzaj@yahoo.com"

"Rock on"

Fancy dates aren't for you—in fact, it's a romantic that you've ever set on Valentine's Day. But your significant other wanted to watch a gig, and you're coming along for the ride. Go in comfortable clothes that will allow you to jump around or mosh as you please without sacrificing style. Grey: pair your favorite worn-out sneakers with a cool jacket and a printed dress, and tie your hair in a messy, low ponytail. Boys: add edge to your basic jeans and tees with accessories like hats, belts and necklaces.

On Sean: White V-neck shirt, P195; dark blue skinny jeans; studded slim belts, P199 each; leather necklaces, P349 each; pyramid studded cuff, P179; leather cuff, P149; all Folded and Hung. On Jaime: Blue printed dress, P1,095; Black jacket, P1,295; rhinestone pins, P295 each; printed ring bag, P1,095; all Freeway. Silver studded bangle, P349; cuff, P179; black and silver slim bangle, P149; all Folded and Hung.

Amorita

Love you can wear

SWATCH, THE WORLD'S leading maker of fashion watches and jewelry presents a romantic special full of wind-blown hearts and whirls.

Amorita

Dazzling in on the wings of a storm, Amorita is a whirl of love for that special 'deliverance'. The pendant is a stainless steel 316L link chain offers a stainless polished stainless steel 316L heart dressmaid with a swirling spiral engraved and mixed with red synthetic resin. Dangling from the largest heart is a small heart-shaped charm made of polished stainless steel 316L with a red synthetic resin lining. In this wrap two hearts are joined.

Bouquet D'Amour

A pure heart and hand draws an innocent message of love. The white ribbon strap of this pure and simple bracelet Green holds a solid white plastic case around a white dial filled with hand-drawn hearts to paint shades of pink, purple, yellow, red and blue. In the absence of all numerals, black lines and minute hands and a date red account hand mark the time.

Bouquet D'Amour

In UP, traditional love still rules

Pumapagdi

look at college students' perceptions, attitudes and practices toward romance.

The respondents were asked to describe love using 10 pairs of words on a semantic differential scale. According to them, romantic love is orientable, fun and romantic. However, it is not close if one has to be mature to achieve it. Sometimes, while romantic love can be mature, it is not boring, but fun and enjoyable.

Partner preferences

The survey looked at the statistical preferences in choosing a partner, and found out that respondents do not take physical appearance as the most important factor in a partner. Good moral character (remember Gilbert, in high school?) is at the top of the list, followed by personality and intelligence.

Gender or sexual orientation is also a top factor in partner preference, as is the family. A potential partner should have the makings of a good spouse as well as a good family background. The context of each others' families is also important.

Physical appearance is, of course, also important, though the respondents look at the overall appearance and not just attraction to a partner.

Results also show that students are more open to dating people who are not in their social circles. Race is the least important factor, as well as the possibility that potential partners might come from other schools outside UP and from other nationalities. Political views and skin color, presumably because of race, also rank lowest.

Expressing love

Constant communication is the most important expression of love in relationships, according to the respondents. It, while people may be busy, it is important to keep in touch with each other. Respondents see their significant others also as confidants; sharing secrets is important in a relationship.

Celebrating special occasions together and going out on dates follow as important expressions of love in a relationship.

Meanwhile, displays of affection, usually intimate acts and sexual intercourse rank lowest in expressions of love. While UP students are thought to be liberal, or more liberal than the average student, the study showed that they are still traditional in terms of relationships. They do not seem to give much importance to sexual intercourse.

Commitment, intimacy, passion

According to Robert Sternberg, the psychologist who developed the triangular theory of love, the three components of love are passion, commitment and intimacy. Among the three, commitment is seen by UP students as the most important element in relationships, specifically getting through relationship problems and making the relationship last.

Intimacy, or feelings of connectedness and closeness in relationships, is manifested through the experience of happiness when being with their significant other and receiving emotional support, as well as through complete and reciprocal trust.

The respondents ranked passion as the least important among the components of love. This refers to physical attraction and sexual consummation in relationships. Not surprising, as physical attributes and sexual intimacy do not rank as high in partner preferences and in expressions of love in the study. However, the instructors aspect of passion is ranked high in importance, though this is marrying in the emotional and not the physical sense.

As 'ragmanunahal' and as 'mirasanhal'

As giver of love, the respondents are more willing to give emotional support and trust to their significant others or would-be significant others. They are also willing to give affection as well as gifts to show their love.

Respondents are also willing to give academic support through helping with school work and projects, or even just encouragement from academic stress.

Meanwhile, they are least willing to give sex or sacrifice their virginity in a relationship. They are also not willing to give financial support to their current or would-be significant others.

As receiver of love, on the other hand, UP students expect to receive what they would give to their partners or would-be partners. They expect to receive trust, emotional support and affection from others.

However, they do not expect sex from their partners and their partners' virginity while in a romantic relationship. They also do not expect their partners to give them financial support, which can imply that UP students wish to have financial independence from their significant others.

Traditional values

The results of the study imply that, contrary to the widespread perception, UP students are still traditional in terms of relationships. While they can be liberal in terms of their views and opinions, relationships are still traditional to them. Sexual acts and sexual intimacy are not considered as important to make relationships last.

UP students probe what is within the person—his or her personality, character, intelligence—than what is outside, such as materialistic values and success. This means they are also more open to dating people outside their own social circles.

2BU SURVEY

How i want to celebrate Valentine's day, if i had my way

Text and photos by Nikki Mark M. Sablan
2BU Correspondent

MOST PEOPLE SHARE THE sweet time for a romantic Valentine's Day date: having a candlelit dinner at a new restaurant, preferably with overpriced and hard-to-pronounce dishes as the menu. There are equally exciting alternatives, of course, such as watching the last full show of a matchless or a rom-com at the cinemas, searching a museum full a bunch of friends who can't stage a concert on their own, famous ones, or an international has-been), or going to a hopefully secluded and dreamy destination, which always turns out to be the most crowded and the most un-romantic place that day. Hell it, today must be a romantic day for couples, by hook or by crook. And so along with going out, there are also chocolates, greeting cards, stuffed toys and flowers sent out, to achieve that. But while we—or our partners—like stickishly plan for the best days ever, there are just some times when they don't pan out as expected. Boo-hoo's happen, so you and your significance when simply don't share the same definition of "the best Valentine's Day days ever." From singles to close duets, fully attached, from cheapskates to those who saved up for days, to day to make sure they have a blast, here's a bunch of responsedoms and how they'd love to celebrate (or not) this day of love.

E-mail the author at nikki.sablan@inshor.com.

I'LL celebrate it with my family and Clark, of course.—my four-legged bud! —Bella

I would definitely get two first class tickets to Tuscany, Italy for me and my honey. We would then go to Piazza Del Pinzi in Volterra, walk around (and maybe rent a Vespa!) and get lost in the beautiful city. After that, a nightcap in one of the café's near the fountain and watch the stars in the sky. —Ross Ringgonon

I would be spontaneous and original because Valentine's Day is a day of rekindling your love for each other. I am a man who does not notice going out or dining in fancy restaurants, or getting the most expensive flowers or gifts. Everything should come from your own imagination and heart (cause if it was done before in movies. So I would cook for my woman, treat her like a princess, and serenade her with songs that make me think of her. As for the location, it would be my own backyard. —Rikardi Lopez III, 28

I would throw a party for single people! —Jasmine Rashmie 24

Pwede kaya sa concert o Rex

FOR ME, I will celebrate Valentine's Day with my "Honey" on a yacht with matching romantic candlelight dinner in the middle of the ocean. So we can be alone all night long! —Chet, 20

Smith! —Mark Jean Alito, 23

I am single so I wasn't really to celebrating. I would love it though if Valentine's Day won't be so crazy this year that it'd make the malls jam-packed the traffic snarled the lines of it and up this way though. —Ivan, 20

If I had my way, I wouldn't celebrate it at all. I'm a contented heart, everyday is a day to celebrate. —Melysa, 21

If I had my way, I would call Chris

To and and him to go to an out-of-town trip particularly in Tagaytay Highlands. Haha, in my dreams! —Kat, 20

I would celebrate it with my "special someone" in a secluded place.

—Migs, 22

As for me, I want my Valentine's Day to be celebrated with my "special someone" in an extraordinary way like celebrating it on the next trip. —Rose, 19

Immaturity check! Feb. 14 is a typical day for me. —Ken, 21

I would want to celebrate it with my "Love Doxy" on the top of a mountain! Particularly Pocook Lomboan in Tagbo-ongoing of the cyclone in Connagotan! —Tiac, 18

I would want it to be celebrated by the beach—private romantic dinner with Pangat J. —Cally, 20

I want a beach dinner and we can head to a hotel after. It's so nice to guess what happens next. —Ener, 23

I want to celebrate it with my family in an expensive yet antique and touch restaurant. —Marie, 20

I never celebrated Valentine's Day during whole 20 years with a special someone. I have a boyfriend now but it's hard because we're miles apart. If I had my way and if I had the resources right now, I would definitely fly and cross thousands of miles to be with him. Perhaps making it a surprise wouldn't be a good idea because he might do the same (good friends have allies). Bringing him one of his favorites, coco pan, will make it a little bit sweeter. I would like to do have things but being with him is the only thing I really want this Valentine's Day. It's my very first Valentine's Day with a significant someone anyway, best to make it a long-lasting honeymoon! —Angel T. Ortaleza, 22

I would go back to the Philippines just to be with my girlfriend on our first Valentine's day together! My idea is so original for all work. I'd book a flight that will allow me to arrive in the Philippines in the morning, so that I'll have time to

make it to her work just before she finishes her shift at 2 p.m. I would sit right outside of her office door and wait for her to come out. I don't need to have any flowers with me, because I think they are overrated. I don't really know any good locations to take your special someone to in the Philippines. We always talked about cooking for each other so what better way to spend our first Valentine's Day together than to cook for each other and relish our own dishes? The way I know that we both put our own thoughts and heart and soul in to it. Aside from that, not knowing what dish we're going to prepare for each other and not knowing how it would taste like would add a little thrill to it. We could also share it with the family. After a nice dinner and possibly a chat with her family, I'd rather just stay in and watch movies with her, something we both enjoyed doing when I was there to visit her. That way, we can have the time to cuddle with each other and spend every moment of what's left of that day together. Since we live so far away, every second that I'm with her is valuable to me. Not only do I treasure her, but I also treasure every moment that we spend together. That's why I would want to spend every second of our non-personal time in Makati, without the interruptions of anyone if possible. —B. R. Tamayo, 22, Canada

I'd celebrate it with my sister at home. She's the love of my life! —Grace, 21

If I had my way, we would spend it doing what each other would like to do the most—play PS games with him and he also would eat chat at the nearest mall. —Noelle, 20

If I had my way, I would spend my Valentine's Day with my family with just a simple celebration at home. —Love, 22

I'd celebrate Valentine's Day with my SWOOP and guess whether he's shown or not. A simple yet romantic dinner would be fine.

—Florise, 20

I'd celebrate it at home together with my family. We'd eat, eat, eat and eat even more. —Aimee, 20

It's either of the two things—sleep all day or watch Mayan Avenue or perhaps have Mayan Avenue in my bedroom and I'll sleep with them! —Victoria, 20

If I had my way, since I am single, I would treat my other single friends out on a lunch or dinner—cheers to all singles! —Lay, 20

I WOULD sleep all day. But, of course, I would have to spend it with my significant other. After all, what's so special about Valentine's Day if you don't spend it with the most important person in your life, right? —Evangelina Allenza, 23

I'D SPEND it with my significant other, somewhere that's not crowded or noisy.—like the beach. We'll have dinner and watch both the sunset and the sunrise. I'm not being very creative here, but I'd rather spend it this way rather than just going to the mall. —Tessa Acuña, 24

Stripe Polo P1299
Terry Hoodzip Hol P 899

Poplin Longsleeves P1799
Biker Jacket P3699
Pullover Hol P1349

Stripe V-neck Top P 899
Red Denim Shorts P1499

Cord Set P 999
Biker Jacket P3699

Giordano Summer '09 Collection

Finally the countdown to our most anticipated season has begun, Summer!! The Giordano primer for its Spring/Summer '09 collection welcomes the season with a fresh pop of color. Stylish and comfortable tees, shirts, shorts and pants are available in bright red, yellow, blue, green and white, very clean yet very eye-catching especially when matched with their cute striped light-weight carry all bag for summer. Whatever your style the collection will surely have pairings for any casual call so make sure to let Giordano stress your way for the best summer ever!

super LIFESTYLE
style . urban living . pop culture . entertainment . recreation

SUPER EXCLUSIVE

Inside the Eheads' rehearsal

Super was the first to print exclusive in-depth interviews with the Eraserheads after last year's reunion concert. This time, Rock Ed's Gang Badoy gains exclusive access to the studio during the Eraserheads' rehearsals. You have questions, we have answers

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GARFIELD — By Jim Davis

A. LIRIN — By Jess Abrera

FUGGO BARGY — By Ph. Junior

DICK TRACY

LOVEHONOTE — By Elizabeth Chionglo

JAMES BOND

DIVINE COMEDY — By Steven Rabalais

BABY BLUES — By Jerry Scott

ATOMO AND WEBBY — By Lisa Gapcelliano

FULDOK — By Maria Coll

KIKO MACHINE — By Mark Abeja

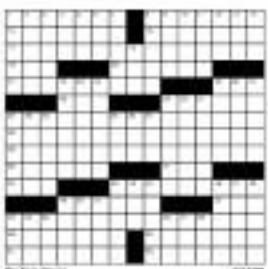
BEN — By Daniel B. Kilton

DAILY CROSSWORD

ACROSS
1 Subjects a horse
8 Wall liner
13 Flourish of numbers
15 Okra
17 Kubrick's maiden title
18 Old kiln by-product
19 Bevy
21 Mortar mix
22 CIT rank
23 Crammer's circle
25 Bigha
26 Trek against traffic
28 Abolish Islamic sovereignty
29 Peter Sellers movie with "The"
31 Reviewer on stage
33 Catch sound?
34 Kennedyan SHO
40 Criteria
41 Dive maneuver
42 Change in a will?
43 Management by brainwashing
44 Kournikova or Hingis
45 Pet food
61 Riggins' nickname
62 Sun-baked

DOWN
1 Rubbed out
2 Sec. Stern
3 Decorate a shrine
4 Sandwich cop
5 Pre-fix (with)
6 Tack sail of
7 Bishop's unit
8 One who has been to Mecca
9 U of C word
10 Hawk
11 Yuck
12 Tear apart
14 ___ up (clean)
16 Studio or stun
20 Clear, like mud
24 Mill out
27 Knotty on a sweater, e.g.
30 Bustle
32 Basketball score
37 Screen strongman
38 Bobby
39 Want to inspect
44 "Broken dollar" vendor (Mozart)
45 Widows of knights
53 Endeavor
54 Fix laptop
55 New Testament bk.
56 Sleepless or Tonto
57 Jewish coat
58 Bishop's unit
59 One who has been to Mecca
60 U of C word
61 Hawk
62 Yuck

By Ron Pfeiffer
Chicago, IL



Friday's Puzzle Solved

HOROSCOPE

By Francis Drake

PISCEANS TODAY: Anyone capable of wrestle, the theme of your workdays are famous as tasty cities or valuable soil drains. That's because you have to plan and some of you were like practical jokes. You have to your own. This year you will wrap up something you've been working on and will be the person who gets credit for it. Your lucky numbers are Bolivia at Hard Rock, Mumbai, Associate Product Manager opposite.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): Now that your salary originally pushed about it early, you're ready to get back in action. Relax, will go forward with much more energy, and with others.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): Make you proceeded to loosen, but don't get bullied early bird words can now be encountered and ghost some consideration and opportunities. Consider this a second kick at the can.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): Chores, some that look about in early January blood entertainment, shared property and economic matters are back on the table. This time you might see how to make it all happen.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): Chores, some that look about in early January blood entertainment, shared property and economic matters are back on the table. This time you might see how to make it all happen.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): Plans and ideas you've been working on for quite a while don't quite work out as you'd like. Don't get discouraged. Go back to the drawing board and try again. Be patient and learn to do the work with the people you love.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): Your progress is somewhat limited, but you're ready to make some changes. Someone will pull a new idea. Be open to new ideas and you'll soon be making progress on anything related to career.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): Vacation plans that might have been tabled have suddenly become possible. Be willing to be with anyone and dealing with problems are more ready for action. Don't be too impressed.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): Vacation plans that might have been tabled have suddenly become possible. Be willing to be with anyone and dealing with problems are more ready for action. Don't be too impressed.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): A lot of business ideas and opportunities are coming your way. However, you're not ready to act on them. Hope that you have the green light for all the time.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): Early you're not ready to act on them. However, you're not ready to act on them. Hope that you have the green light for all the time.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): Early you're not ready to act on them. However, you're not ready to act on them. Hope that you have the green light for all the time.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): Tomorrow night, social activities are taking place in your neighborhood. Be sure you're not talking anyone anything you're even a stranger to the dark.

CONCEPTIS SU DOKU

Conceptis SudoKu — By Dave Green

	1			6			4	
3			1		4	7		2
	8							
	3						9	
7				2				3
	6						5	
							8	
4		8	3		9			5
	5			4			7	

Difficulty Level ★★★★

©2009 Conceptis Puzzles, Dave Green, www.conceptispuzzles.com

HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.

Tips and programs at www.sudoku.com

Answer to previous puzzle

9	1	2	8	6	7	4	5	3
3	4	6	5	1	2	8	9	7
5	8	7	3	4	9	2	1	6
2	7	4	6	3	1	9	8	5
6	3	8	2	7	5	6	4	1
8	5	1	4	9	6	7	3	2
7	2	9	1	5	4	3	6	8
1	6	3	7	8	8	5	2	4
4	9	5	9	2	3	1	7	9

Inside the Eheads' rehearsal

Text and photos by Gang Badoy

THE WORD IS OUT: THE POST-SCRIPT to the phenomenal August gathering of the Eraserheads is on in a few weeks—it is confirmed and now totally unexpected. With the show ending so abruptly the last time, if you big reunion-people can't wait for the concert's date to arrive.

The Eraserheads are currently rehearsing for the three and we know you have a lot of questions. Here are questions about the rehearsals collected from people on Multiply along with answers.

Did they come with a prepared set list?

So they did.

Who wrote the set list?

By doubted the initial set list. Then Raymund and Marcus met up with Ely about a week ago to firm up the order of the songs. Buddy wasn't there, but they figured that Buddy is still better than one. On the rehearsal days, still, they sat down inside Blue Light Studio's mini-room and discussed production details. A lot of times were there was input and according to Raymund, they kept the ones that were funny and cool.

Did they choose their songs based on crowd favorites?

Yes! They chose the songs based on what they thought the audience would like to hear. They also had to listen to what the opening show is also considered—by name—a consideration of last August's reunion.

Did they synchronize skeletons?

No.

Did they take long to set up or was it fast? What sets did each musician bring and which effects did the guitarists rearrange with?

Raymund and Marcus went into the studio ahead of the two and started tweaking on their own. They finalized some to Ely's overall friend when he sets up himself. Ely had someone tune his Danelico acoustic while he did the mic tests etc. For the rehearsals, both Ely and Marcus used a Fender Stratocaster. Ely using less effects and Marcus used something that looked like Digitech. Buddy used his Fiskenbacker bass guitar and Zoom effects. Raymund brought his own mike, snare drum and pedal and played on the common Blue Light Studio drum set.

Mag-peperfect pala! Do they rip their songs and—

Hindi to play.

Did they still remember all the chords and arrangements?

So they did remember it, but naturally there were some parts more shaky than others. Very few though. Like two or three some.

Was there any song that didn't sound so good that they abandoned it?

No, they ran through all the songs on the set list to the end. To tempo, just a bit of static.

What track did they repeatedly run through?

Something their rehearsals was like sandpaper pala, actually. That was the first band rehearsal I've seen where no one was interrupted in mid-song to work on something out.

Did they try to rearrange the songs?

Nothing like that, actually. They talked more in regards to the production details but when it came to the songs, seemed like there was no urgent need to rearrange yet. It was, after all, just the first rehearsal for this particular session.

Tagaloo ba sila kung mag-rehearse?

Ano ng Diyos, hindi.

Did they approach the rehearsal in a business-like manner or was it loose and laid-back?

They were as professional as they should be. The silliness here and had-back were adlibbers that never came to my mind while I was there.

Jokes pa din ba si Marcus?

During rehearsals focused si Marcus, before or after—in a whole different time. Hindi nawawalan ng humor. Full-on.

Was it smooth or were there changeover-moments about how things should go?

It was smoother and better than everyone expected, according to the band members. Everybody played well. The atmosphere was comparatively lighter and they guessed it was because they were more comfortable now and each other this time.

Did anyone criticize the other's playing?

None, ever. It was really quiet in between songs. I could feel their thought balloons saying, "Ang galing niya!" rolling.

What was the rehearsal food during the breaks?

I duly sampled the spaghetti and sandwich. They also had a great healthy sandwich spread out. Imbi-sliced bread, cold cuts, turkey, tomatoes and other condiments were available too. I imagined that the silly style of the table was for the rest of the bands, while the healthier looking fare was included with special consideration for Ely's dietary restrictions. Good. The Heads have paid their dues, so they deserve the red carpet roll-out.

Was there booze or did they play clean?

No booze whatsoever. Just a lot of water and hot coffee/tea. Coffee for the sake of Buddy. I don't think I noticed what Ely was drinking. Agua nang ata.

How many hours did they spend rehearsing?

The group met at 2 p.m., I got there at 3 p.m. and found them huddled talking about the song order. Then got settled into the studio a bit past that and started playing a stream of songs, intro tapping through the first planned set. Raymund suggested a break. And Ely said jokingly, "Spa break na ngayon!" Everyone in the studio was comfortable plugging, the atmosphere was giddy when people streamed out of the studio back to the mini-room. There was some pleasing with the entire group including the MTV decision makers and their respective managements. A second round inside the studio happened after that, this time acoustic and more relaxed. Buddy was feeling under the weather so he left ahead of everyone. Marcus and Raymund left a bit past 7 p.m., while Ely was the last to leave the building.

How many rehearsals left? I suppose one more?

Exactly that. For sure.

Did they come prepared?

Jazz Mendoza (Bidyowoman) wasn't there yet. But Jazz is a genius, he doesn't need to prepare.

What do you think would've been different if it was just the four of them without all the encores shooting?

This would be my guess: With or without cameras, they'd have still practiced the same way. There four have been celebrities longer than half their lives, they are used to being watched. In fact, I think it helps to have the cameras for them to still see as opening, because they are so familiar to the public, we all think we know these guys. No deep, dark closeup secrets, at least not any more than the regular gossip.

Could you discern vibes that each member plays in reaction to others?

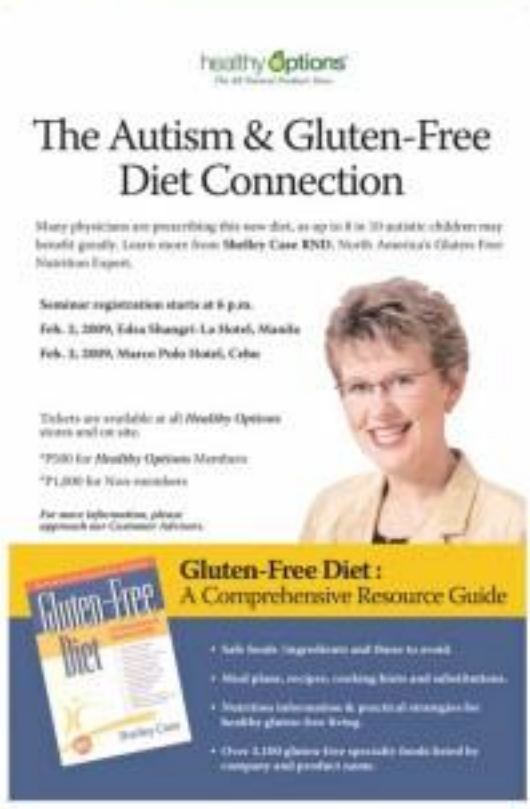
Watch is literally and figuratively the best player and he's always been the one that "held the line." Marcus is the rhythm guitar and he dictates the pace for everyone (even if he isn't aware of it or even if he doesn't realize too much of that fact. Raymund is the drummer, he's the "side-talk" man who keeps the mix shut when energy should be taken a level up or down, he is aware of that and is in every one. Ely is the main song writer and the musician of the band, so he has the thematic down to the table and says, "This is what it will look like, any suggestions?" When I think I'm witnessing is a band of young dorm guys from UP Diliman who gained magnanimous fame back for reasons so convoluted that all of them don't even understand exactly why or what made them part in the first place, and how they are again, this time on equal footing. It's easier for them to see eye to eye this time around.

How do you see the Eraserheads?

I see musicians who felt and still feel the need to just what in order to rediscover their individual identities. I think going these steps, one more was all they needed to come back together and stand again in that circular formation inside a studio. Here, they have only other with their own synergy of creativity forged elsewhere, plus insane amounts of the songs famous of their own.

During the rehearsals, which song did the band decide would be a crowd favorite during the concert? Are they counting up a sequence for the crowd—can you give hints and clues?

I'm sure you'd easily guess that I don't answer this one thoroughly. All I can reveal is that I overheard Buddy telling a tech person to change that the sound system should be adjusted so that everyone watching gets a good view and a good audio output. I appreciate the way he said that the area of the general admission tickets should get a great view of the screen and that the sound there should be exquisite because that area is the priority. I thought that was cute. I definitely like the letter-to-the "Heads better than the celebrities" distinction; pasiko they used to be.



Where to take *your date* tonight

By Mae Guieta
Contributor

YOU MUST HAVE A game plan!" Some are voice records answered by one of my best friends when we were discussing Valentine's Day not too long ago.

As a veteran of numerous eye-gouging pain-filled words which I did not just politely concur, I tend to agree. I've had a couple of dates where I didn't prepare and had to contend with aching to waffle for hours. Figuring out where to go, only to pick the first restaurant or bar which had available seating space.

And the complimentary bottle of red rose for my date didn't help at all.

If you haven't decided where to take your wife/girlfriend/mistress/mom/boss/boyfriend, here are a few suggestions which might help when planning your special evening:

Tip Number 1: Do not go to a Japanese restaurant.

I'm sure you know what I'm talk about: try smelling yourself after eating in a Japanese restaurant. Budding up and making out after a meal here is not easy—unless you like smooching a tobacco grill dressed in teppanyaki sauce. BTT...If you must eat Japanese, get your sushi fix in Greenbelt 1 in Eddie or Ayala (Alabang).

TOKYO-TOKYO: Near perfect ramblings, some classy cooky yummy and affordable food

TOKYO-TOKYO: Near Mati, romantic ambiance, limited drink selection

Tip Number 2: Go for the lesser band

If you're feeling a bit extravagant, pay some pesos on cool band. Off to Blackfin in Mandarin Oriental Hotel. This bar is dark, elegant, and intimate—perfect when you want to shower your date with sweetness. The wide selection of drinks also helps in loosening up your date.

TOKYO-TOKYO: Ambiance is ideal for small talk and secret handholding. Pastel rosaria squeeze

TOKYO-TOKYO: Pricey

Tip Number 3: Go for the view

A nice view with a nice meal usually helps in sealing the deal. Try the Skyline Lounge at the rooftop of Henry Sutton in Filinvest Corporate City in Muntinlupa. You can pretend it's the Empire from Building and make like Guy Grant and Jacqueline Gold.

TOKYO-TOKYO: The view of Laguna Bay and Bilibid Manila. Solid recommendation

TOKYO-TOKYO: Just-about food

Tip Number 4: All bets to the park

If your date's tastes are up-scale, have your dinner at Tolo in Loyola Building in Makati. Walk to over-charging, succulent menu. Two-time you're in for a treat. Think truffles and lamb and chocolate and wine.

TOKYO-TOKYO: Great food, good wine selection

TOKYO-TOKYO: Pricey

Tip Number 5: When all else fails, Boost

Interiors? You can head to over to Hershey just off Mall of Asia. Devour your sweetness in a plate or two of chicken strings. Reflect on your singlehood in the Hooters Girls freshness in front of you.

TOKYO-TOKYO: Hooters!

TOKYO-TOKYO: Hooters!

24/7 Not for the faint of heart

SUPER RADAR

By Janice Ceneza-Dato and Gloriavela Espinosa

ALL THOSE WHO have been waiting for Valentine's Day can enter a collective breezeh sigh. We have hit ground zero. Get ready to mark your calendars as this week is filled with events that are definitely not for the faint at heart. Dares, of course, are purely optional.

What does **Bonnie Lloyd** have? Find out tonight by heading over to the Music Museum at the Greenhills Shopping Center for her first solo Valentine's Day concert entitled **Bonnie Lloyd: I Love...** Starting at 8 p.m., you can listen to her belt out love songs that highlight her musical covers. For tickets and inquiries, call 725-4720 or 481-9999.

PHOTOS Contributed

Peter Cetera also hits the stage tonight for his **Valentine's Day concert at the Araneta Coliseum.** Between his tender ballads and the 43-piece symphony orchestra backing him up, so tonight or would be couple stands a chance against the romance he has to be dished out, Cetera-style. Call 911-3055.

You have until Sunday to make the trip to Clark, Pampanga for the **Philippine International Air Show Versus 2009.** Expect other activities such as a light plane demo, sky jumping and a remote-controlled planes exhibition. The sky is definitely without limit in this event. For cost rates, join the free flying contest if you prefer to keep your feet on the ground, log on to http://philippineairshow.com.ph for the complete details.

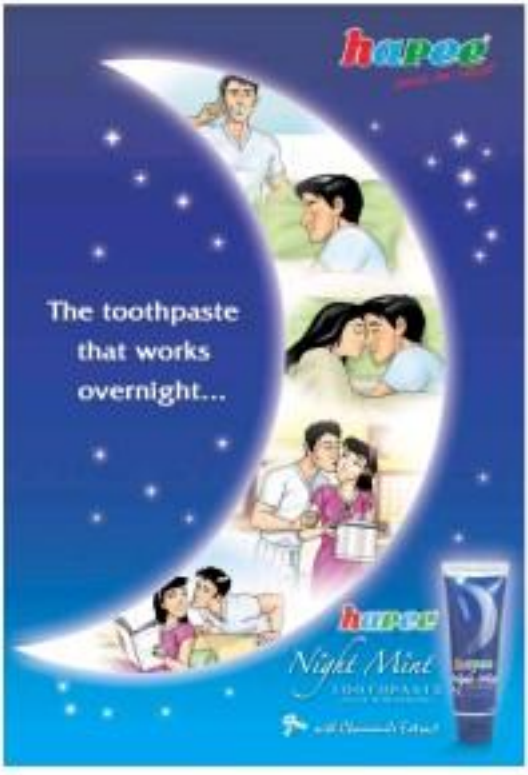
I Love You Because, a modern day musical interpretation of Jane Austen's Pride and Prejudice, is showing at **Greenbelt 5**, until March 8. Catch this romantic comedy about people existing love and the inevitable obstacles that follows. Evening shows on Fridays and Saturdays are at 8 p.m. while Saturday and Sunday matinees are at 2:30 p.m. For tickets and reservations, call 887-4713 or 891-9999.

Information is subject to change without prior notice. For more information on events, log on to www.mggb4-7.com or just text your free copy of 24/7 Metro reel listings to your favorite mobile, here and wednesdays.

You may also text 24/7 gig to 2651 for Globe and Sun and 2652 for Smart.

Submit your schedules before Tuesday to events@mggb4-7.com and mag247@gmail.com for inclusion in this column.

HOT AIR: Ballooning by night in Clark this weekend.



hapee VALENTINE'S DAY from hapee Night Mint The toothpaste that works overnight...

Spend the evening with this pianist

"ROMANCE IN THE CLOUDS," an intimate and romantic evening Valentine's dinner with Chito Medina and Trio at Hector's Bar, Top of Century Park, Century Park Hotel, 599 P. Ocampo St., Malate, Manila. An invocation of repose of love songs, dessert, sweetery luau. Chito will deliver a fresh take on heart-warming measures of romance with his piano and vocal stylings on an instrumental format of Valentine memories.

Showtime is 6:30. Please reserve early due to limited seating. Contact person is Michelle Gargollo at 528-5555.

super LIFESTYLE

NICOLA Bulgari (right), grandson of the jewelry house's founder, with daughter Veronica, former Ambassador Bienvenido Tamayo Jr. and then Italian Ambassador to the Philippines Gracia Bimbisetti formally opened the 6758 boutique on Feb. 14, 1999. This year's honoree, the boutique will be huge in both input and new clients alike. It's the only global luxury jeweler that carries its entire line here.

BULGARI store

Bulgari's tony Manila address marks 10th year

By Cheche V. Perez

THERE'S MORE THAN ONE good reason Mario Knightsbridge is his usual genial self to this business climate, his warm smile and proud stance a stark contrast to the mien of many luxury executives these days.

His charge for 12 years and counting in Manila, Bulgari, is celebrating its 125th anniversary and its first Manila boutique at 6758 Ayala is marking its 10th year today. Valentine's Day. On top of that, Knightsbridge happily reports, the recession hasn't touched the Bulgari business in these shores.

"It will come," he concedes. "But it will not be as bad as projected. Worst-case scenario is [sales will be] the same as last year. But I'm an optimist and my perception is [sales] will be at least 10 percent higher."

This confidence isn't entirely blind faith or wishful thinking on Knightsbridge's part. After all, it's not likely his market, no matter the global financial situation, will trade down to an attainable brand.

"I have yet to come across [a client] who says I'm not buying anymore because of the recession," he says. They always say, 'What's your latest?'" Besides, high jewelry is purchased each, not credit.

PARENTHESIS ring with pavé diamonds

It is, however, with some prudence that he's holding back on his initial plan of bringing the Italian jeweler's high-jewelry pieces—decor with price tags from P5-P20 million—until later this year. He said it's always the rare-still, big-ticket pieces [say, a P4-million necklace] that sell first—and quick.

"I'll be affected by the aspirational market but not the high-end. The thinking is, the person has no value, so they might as well put it in something that will ultimately increase in value." He adds dryly, "It's the little things that make every lamp so more."

He clarifies, though, that it's not just about. It's 400 that are leaving. Young clients who are building their jewelry collection "upward" are more the difference between a Bulgari and a local piece. They know that compared to a local piece that weighs 10 carats, the 5-carat Bulgari has bigger value. Before, people went to someone each other by the size of the stone, never mind if it was yellowish or brownish. Now the young people invest in the brands because they know they have more resale value."

Recently, sales dropped by 5 percent—but only for the so-called aspirational market. But Knightsbridge attributes this to the post-holiday season when people give the pocketbook a break. He expects things to pick up this Valentine's.

MODELS with the Flora Collection, presented at Revlon Makati Shangri-La in 2005. Below, a model shows a piece from the Rosso Sapphire Collection (2006) no dinner gowns.

PARENTHESIS men's white-gold tension necklace

Destination store

The local Bulgari market has grown tremendously over the last decade—quite a lot, which gives a promising outlook for the local luxury market, says its country manager. Before the 6758 boutique, Bulgari began selling its watches at Rustan's in 2006—in Makati, Alabang and Trinoma where they still are today. Even after the Greenbelt 4 boutique opened a few years ago, the adjacent 6758 store remained just as busy.

"It's a destination store," Knightsbridge explains. "People who come here are those who shop leisurely. They come with friends and family, sit here and go through the collection. They leave, and then come back and buy. The big buyers like it here because there's more privacy here compared to the Greenbelt store. In Greenbelt, a lot of people go in and out. If they come here, it's with the intent to buy."

BVLGARI white-gold double-ellipse ring with blue topaz and pavé

Its country manager has reason to smile these days. The sheen of the high-jewelry market has not faded

ENTRANCE of the Shang Palace in Makati Shangri-La for the Rosso Sapphire Collection launch (2006)

BVLGARI diamond earrings/necklace

The 6758 boutique was inaugurated on Feb. 14, 1999 by Bulgari vice chair Nicola Bulgari, the founder's grandson, and daughter Veronica. Gracey and models for the glitz affair included beauty queens and society women. It would set the course for all succeeding Bulgari events and product launches.

Shows and launches are sit-down dinners—and are always selling events, Knightsbridge keeps the guest list to a minimum—and only to customers. "I put all the money into the food, the wine and the entertainment because that's what Bulgari is all about." His last event was a caviar dinner for 100. Every year, from 9th, 12-16, to host client events known, there's free-flowing champagne and wine with lines of caviars all day at both boutiques.

Out of its way

Bulgari goes out of its way to pamper clients, they who are used to the VIP treatment. Apart from greeting customers with a personal note their birthday, Knightsbridge goes the extra mile. Last Christmas Day he personally attended at a client in the latter's home in Antecentrum the complex looking forward to a precious lunch, the client's gift to his wife.

But this isn't unusual with Bulgari. "This is a business where you have to offer the client that touch," he says. "I learned [from client's outings and events]—when you present a product, when you have people, your show manners—every bit counts." Knightsbridge relies largely on a long-time staff he calls his team. "I don't get events or questions. I organize them. If you have, they may not know your standards."

HEVI Diagono Complication watch

While Bulgari in Manila awaits the release of the 2009 collections, it will roll out in March its 125th anniversary limited edition ring, tales of which will go in part to fund the Children Foundation. The engraved sterling silver ring is in tribute to its founder, Sotirio Bulgari, who started out as a silversmith.

It will also release 15 high-jewelry pieces and eight luxury timepieces, all one of a kind, which will be exhibited and auctioned off in June/July late this year. Proceeds of the sales will go entirely to charity.

"The effect in all your through, not just because of the recession" says Knightsbridge. "I don't stop even when sales are very high. I'm never challenged. And I'm proud to say we've always conducted ourselves."

So, what's not there to smile about?

THE DINNER setup at the foyer of Revlon Makati Shangri-La for the Flora Collection presentation (2005).

PARENTHESIS was launched at a cocktail party at the Greenbelt 4 garden in 2006. The collection was shown at Ayala Museum.

ANOTHER lavish dinner setup for 100 select clients for the 2004 launch of Kalvado

A weekly directory of the country's best establishments

Where to Stop Where to Go

Just the two of us

Have a very special and romantic dinner with the person closest to your heart on Valentine's Day at Astoria Plaza. Indulge on the five-course degustation dinner fit for the most discriminating gourmet which their Executive Chef carefully selected. For the main course, diners have a choice of having sliders Grabera Hiller with Riesling Mustard Sauce or US Beef Tenderloin with Bearnaise Dijon Sauce. Each course is generally accompanied by the appropriate wine to make the dinner truly memorable. While having dinner, be serenaded by our band as they play treasured love songs. This Valentine's Day degustation dinner is priced at P1,299++ per person. For reservations, call Astoria Plaza at 687-1111 ext. 8004 and 8005.

Astoria Plaza is located at 15 J. Escriva Drive, Ortigas Business District, Pasig City. For inquiries and reservations call 6871111, ext. 8002/8004/8005/8003 or log on to www.astoriaplaza.com.

Astoria Plaza is managed with distinction by Genesis Hotels and Resorts Corp.

February food promotions at Tin Hau

TIN HAU, MANDARIN ORIENTAL, MANILA's illustrious Chinese restaurant, highlights the rich flavors of Goodness and Salmon, as well as Peking duck. Chef Alvaro Ramos Chan and his team of expert chefs have prepared a special menu featuring delectable Sadness and Salmon until Feb. 22. Diners can enjoy such treats as Crispy fillet of sadness with rhubarb and wasabi oil sauce, Steamed salmon fillet with shimeji mushrooms and black bean sauce, Baked white sadness with bacon, garlic and soy vinaigrette and Oven baked salmon with special BBQ honey sauce. Peking duck lovers will delight in Tin Hau's twist as the roast-to-serving-dish becomes the piece de resistance at this event. A minimum of 6 paying diners at Tin Hau are entitled to a 50-percent discount on a Peking Duck. Tin Hau is open Tuesday to Sunday, for reservations, call 720-0888.

Great Palawan Beach Holiday at Microtel

PUERTO PRINCESA WELCOMES THE FIRST INTERnational hotel chain to open in Palawan! The newest Microtel is also the city's first beachside hotel ideally located at Emerald Beach, only a few minutes drive from the airport and city center.

Scheduled to open in March, the 58-room Microtel Resort features beach and lagoon-view guestrooms with "sleep-score approved "healthy for the back beds", high speed Internet connection, cable TV and electronic keycard entry system. Other facilities include restaurant, swimming pool and function rooms.

Have a great vacation and experience the best view and best value as an introductory rate of P1,800 per night inclusive of breakfast and airport transfers, good for 2 persons.

Microtel is an international chain of hotels with 300+ properties open and under development worldwide. Other Microtels in the Philippines are located in Baguio, Batangas, Boracay, Cabanatuan, Cebu, Davao, Marcos Cebu, Tarlac and soon to open in Mall of Asia complex. All Microtels in the Philippines are managed by Microtel Development Corp., the largest arm of the Briones Group. For inquiries and reservations, call 671.7171 or 0917.5227171, e-mail sales@microtel.ph or log on to www.microtelphilippines.com.

Valentine's Day in New Horizon Hotel

In ancient Rome, Feb. 14 was a holiday to honor Juno, the Queen of the Roman Gods and Goddesses. The Romans also knew her as the Goddess of women and marriage. The following day, Feb-ruary 15th, began the Feast of Lupercalia, where young girls and men were looking for their Valentines in dropping their name to a jar. Nowadays, Valentine's Day remains the day of Love and Lovers. It's the day lovers send each others, sweet cards, chocolates, gifts… It's also the occasion to have a romantic dinner in a star-restaurant with loving songs. New

horizon Hotel is organizing in collaboration with WINE (Wagan Filipino Business Club) a special Belgian Dinner for all Lovers on Saturday, Feb. 14. At this occasion a 5-course menu of Belgian delicacies will be offered for P3675 per person. Fairy-tale wine and tartar sauce, Seafood ravioli and cream sauce, Grilled stuffed turkey with cranberry sauce and "pommes duchesses" will be part of the appetizing dishes served during that evening. It is also time to discover or rediscover the unique creation of "Profiteroles" stuffed with vanilla ice cream. Don't wait any longer, for reservations and inquiries call 523-0061 or e-mail newhorizonhotel@gmail.com.

Cozy Cantonese corner

Make your way to a cozy table for two, and enjoy the charming ambience and scrumptious cuisine of J.G.'s on Valentine's Day. A special 8-course dining experience awaits you and your special someone for only P2,288 net per person. Enjoy exotic Cantonese specialties, such as Stir-Fried Diced Beef Tenderloin with Sweet Walnuts in XO Chili Sauce, Steamed Scallops filled with Shrimp Mousse, Fried Rice with Assorted Meat Wrapped in Lotus Leaf and Steamed Cod Fillet with Minced Bean Paste. Couples who avail themselves of this special set menu will enjoy free-flowing red and white or sparkling wines. J.J.'s is the signature restaurant of Hyatt Hotel and Casino Manila, located on the 6th level of the hotel. For reservations or for inquiries or to make a reservation, call 310-1234.

Crustasia Valentine's Day Special

Thai Rice and Crab Manilenia—Half Slab of Pork Ribs marinated in Thai Spices 400g, cook over sauteed olive oil, garlic noodles P995. Grilled Prawns with Salt and Pepper Ribs served with Chinese sausage rice P680. Red Lobster in Thai Spaghetti- Pacific Lobster over a bed of tangy Thai Spaghetti P735. All specials are served with Pumpkin soup and choice of Green tea or Bonsai Ice Cream. Visit Crustasia Richwell, Powerplant Mall (02) 5463. Greenbelt 5, Ayala Center, Makati City, 818-4090 Promenade Mall, North Triangle Sonrore City 981-3607. Crustasia Alabang, 2nd Level Cote de las Palmas, Alabang Town Center 772-0968.

Romantic Valentine's Dinner at Regency Inn Davao

Regency Inn Davao welcomes and invites you on Feb. 13, 14 and 15 as its special room accommodation sale for only P1,200/per room with special Valentine's dishes for two plus a complimentary cake at only P1,400/room on its second night. Also, Regency's Cidane Restaurant offers Romantic Valentine dinner for only P480/pax. For reservations, call (082) 227-4333 or (082) 221-7777.

Financial Hotel Directory

Movie version . . .

From page 14

movies for her week on "Ice and the City" and "The Devil Wears Prada."

Field, in her trademark fashion, stood out the past-star theater scenes. Isla Fisher (aka Rachel's fiancee, Blair—with the hair) "Wedding Crashers") here this film's star, little Carrie Bradshaw, Rebecca Broussard, a spirited Manhattan metaphor who wears everything at a high fashion rag. Only this girl has a very dark secret: she hasn't met an Hermes or Christian Louboutin she didn't love, so she's $60,000 in credit card debt.

If you like us, read Sophie Kinsella's best-selling novel when it first came out in 2001 and have forgotten all but the "I" word in the title, you needn't go and retrieve that book—and in that opinion—throw your book pile.

The film, directed by P.J. Hogan ("My Best Friend's Wedding"), is based on the first two books of the series. It begins and concludes parts of the plot: once the Becky's dashing knight who, on occasion, can "speak French," Luke Brandon (Hardcore-jawed Hugh Dancy of "Blood and Chocolate," "Ella Enchanted" and "Black Hawk Down"), "Shopaholic" ends in an British part-year as a Hen interview.

LUKE Brandon (played by Hugh Dancy) "speaks Prada." Occasionally.

It seems to say that when a movie is about shopping—and reading up in the red as a result of it—what's a better setting than New York City? "Shopaholic" may never win Oscar level picture, but it sure is quite lovely.

Eclectic

Field's eclectic stamp shines through in the main characters. While Becky is seen toiling away in the system of Shadowsen in a Zac Posen dress and a fixed gazer, she's also shot in the posh hotel with gold-leaf chairs that are an anonymous Japanese designer.

There's a vintage yellow coat on a haunted shopping scene in Henri Bendel, and a little people wander from Grand Lumiere.

Some special places are central to key scenes, like a boldly painted black-and-white coat from the brand Milly. There's the provocative "ugly bridesmaid's dress" that also sears its horrendous head in this movie. And, of course, there's that all-important lolly-green scarf—it must cost multiple pieces to Heidi by Calvin Klein.

("Cautionary, too, Treebeard noted not the entertainment gurus but the lifestyle and fashion media in this week's preview.)

The fashion pageant in "Shopaholic" is a road maze. Here are beautiful and absolutely divine things—dangled literally in Becky's (and you, the viewer's) face by fashion fairies—quite an store windows. They hand, they entertain, they wiggle. Even Kate Lauren Marc Jacobs Christian Louboutin. This is a movie about.

Confessions

From page 14

ISLA Fisher sells (adopts the Hermes watch she wears in this scene is one of her favorite pieces.

KEY pieces figure prominently in the plot, like this footlocker coat Becky wears at a sample sale, which stands up next to the files as another character.

Your eyes dilate, your heart beats faster, your gait starts to quicken. But you know you can't have them.

"Shopaholic" has its fair share of funny (I was totally sobs-I've also enjoyed one myself) and moments. But, of course, you don't go see the movie for its Oscar worth. You want the dark cinema to get lost in the wonderful and ultra-wicked world of retail, and, for two hours, live vicariously in Becky's fabulous frugal. Goodreader, date it out against your kind for those half-off Gucci boots at a sample sale, almost always successful in the handsome cocoon of silk-and lace.

about fashion working on this movie.

It's not only clothes she loves to buy, is it?

She loves everything, and due to the queen of impulse buying. "Shop now, think later" is her motto. At one point, for example, she thinks she is turning over a new leaf, so she decides to save money by spending money. So she buys a basket of very expensive leather notepads which she calmly assumes friendliers are worth it because they will live right three longer than the cheaper ones, so she thinks they are actually effectively half the price. She has this wonderful logic that she applies to everything and it is hilarious.

How much do you identify with Rebecca?

I do love fashion, although I am not as obsessed with shopping as Rebecca is. But I have been known to peruse the shops in my spare time and enjoy it. And, in terms of clothes, I tend to be a little more relaxed than she is. I am more of a jeans-and-T-shirt girl, than is what I tend to live in most of the time, but then I am a mum. I am pretty much like all my purchases.

There seems to be a lot of physical comedy in the movie.

Yeah, and I am always recovering whether which has been interesting. But I remember once reading a quote that Ginger Rogers did everything Fred Astaire did, but while very high, massive stilettos. She had to with him and did all those moves with him, but in those very high heels. And I have to say, I know how she felt because I have to wear those during whole physical comedy bits.

Have you ever had a fashion emergency?

I have had a few. I remember once I was in a show and I had to wear a dress that was very tight and I had to do a cartwheel and when you do it in heels, it definitely adds an element of danger.

What are the challenges for you in making this kind of romantic comedy?

I think a main challenge in this style of film is just time. You want to find the right balance between making it real and being something that can relate to, but at the same time you have to actually, yet it's the same time you want to keep the comedy. Comedy is a heightened reality and you have to make sure the jokes work and that you get some great funny moments, without sacrificing the character. So it is always a fine line between authenticity and making a feel of yourself," tapping into your inner idiot, but at the same time staying true to the story and not taking it too far.

How important is it for you to maintain with your own working as well as acting?

I still write a lot, and in 15 would probably guess—I rewrite most of my lines. I can't control myself, but I just love writing, it is such a wonderful creative outlet. I really enjoy it. I have written two films and really loved doing that.

What's next to be starring on an interesting path for yourself?

I hope so. I am definitely not following anyone else's career trajectory. Eventually I want to write and create my own roles, because it can be hard for women. But I don't have enough time to focus on writing at the moment, because I have been on hiatus.

Opening across the Philippines on Feb. 18, "Confessions of a Shopaholic" is distributed by Walt Disney Studios Motion Pictures International.

Tours, Leisure & Chow

Take a blissful romance at Microtel Mactan

Blissful romance at Microtel Mactan invites you on Feb. 14 (7 p.m.) to have a sweet escape from your busy world. Invite yourself and experience a romantic evening with your loved ones. At only P1,000 net per person you can already feel the romance—candle light dinner for two, sweet sound of the live band at the Fiesta that would surely wipe you after an exhausting day at home. Plus prove to offer when you avail of this package you'll have a chance to take pleasure in soaking of roses accommodation on a discounted rate by pressing your Valentine's dinner. Rate of the three-star hotel: Standard Room rate at P1,750 inclusive of Fiesta rate at P4,200, Suite Room rate at P5,700 but, all choices with free breakfast for two. Enjoy and impress! Be at your best attire for the night and you will have the chance to win 1 night free room accommodation with breakfast. For inquiries and reservations, call the sales office hotline at (032) 36-8888, or (0917-623 8888.

Gumbrinus Bar now offers Sunday brunch and lunch-to-go

Intercontinental Manila's Gumbrinus Bar ushers in 2009 with its new modern lifestyle offerings. Sunday late-risers can now savor a delicious brunch of eggs Benedict at this very chic bar while taking in the refreshing poolside garden views. To whet your appetite, the restaurant's chef has come up with several variations on this popular egg dish with delightful combinations of spinach, mushroom, salmon, asparagus or ham. Wash it all down with champagne and cocktail concoctions such as Bloody Mary, Tequila Sunrise, Intercontinental Mimosa and Sex on the Beach will be available at break-apt cost pleasures. For folks with hectic schedules, check out Gumbrinus Bar's Lunch-on-the-Go specials. For only P350 one can order to a jiffy a sandwich, pasta or salad of their choice inclusive of a juice drink or mineral water and it's out of the door. The special is available for dine-in, take out or delivery (within 500 meters of the hotel). The sandwiches served, which come from the delicious Delight Counter-faced sandwich of crispy bacon and cheese with fresh pineapple topping), Crunchee Beef Burger (juicy burger in sesame bun served with crispy bacon and your choice of fried eggs or cheddar cheese), Pinoy Sandwich (sandwich filled with your choice of shredded chicken adobo or homemade corned beef), and Grilled Panini Sandwich (warm focaccia bread with grilled zucchini, tomatoes and herb pesto) with extra virgin olive oil, fresh Mozzarella cheese and rubber. Dishes Extraordinaire champ!

For salad lovers there's Greek Caesar Caprese, Fusion Antipasto or Caesar Salad while pasta lovers can indulge in Spaghetti Carbonara, Penne Puttanesca or Tagliatelle Provencial or Cappellini Seafood Marinara. Simply call 750-7000 local 7113 for delivery orders. All orders for delivery must be placed by 10 a.m. Information on other gourmet beverage offerings may be had by calling up the same number.

Valentine's promo at Makati Palace Hotel

Whether single or in love, declare your sense of romance by visiting Gaston's Coffeeshop at the Makati Palace Hotel. Tucked in the quiet corner of F. Benzon Street, Makati, this quaint restaurant offers you a romantic dinner perfect for your Valentines Date. There is nothing more romantic than spending a beautiful evening with your loved ones. On Feb. 13 and 14, Gaston's Coffeeshop will offer a Buffet Dinner that is perfect for lovers' banquet, in a relaxed, elegant atmosphere. For inquiries and reservations call 899-0344.

Thunderbird Resorts supports Pages

THUNDERBIRD RESORTS SUPPORTS OPERATION HOPE of the Philippines (American Group of Educators and Surgeons) hosts 19th annual International Medical Mission is from Feb. 11 to 15 in Morong Provincial Hospital in Rizal. Thunderbird Resorts will help put smiles to children with cleft lip and cleft palate in support of Hope International and Rizal Governor Jun Ynares-Santiago and surgical mission in Morong, Rizal starting Feb. 11 to 16.

The Hope International team of health care volunteers professors the surgery with the cooperation of the Morong Provincial Hospital in Rizal headed by Dr. Bernardo Vergara and Dr. Virgilio Zubio. Last year Thunderbird donated P400,000 to accompanist for the shipment of the 40-foot container of medical equipment and supplies serving Pinas Other. There volunteers clients' 19th medical mission in the Philippines that covers Cebuanians, Rizal and Manila. Pages operated on approximately 14,000 children and young adults from the day the organization started and has trained 21 different hospitals in the country. Providing support to Pages' philanthropic mission will enable the children with cleft lip and cleft palate, who were once ostracized and unwanted, to become productive members of society, giving hope for a better life for them and for their families.

Thunderbird Resorts Rizal also supports Pages by being the

In photo (from left): chairman of Pages Vid M. Figueroa; Vice Governor of Rizal Reina Lee-Jones; Dr. Thunderbird Resorts key executives Fabio Marotti, operations director; Blair Richard, hospitality manager; Harold Perez, bistro manager

official residence of the International Medical Team during its mission in the province. A welcome dinner was held Feb. 11 at the Pool Bar attended by the top executive of the company as well as the founder of Pages Vicki Figueroa and Vice Governor Reina Lee-Jones Jr. of Rizal province.

Thunderbird Resorts Rizal and Boni Point are the first two properties in Asia of the South American Royal Thunderbird Resorts, a worldwide property developer of thematic amusement and leisure environments. For further details log on to www.thunderbirdresorts.com/philippines.

Movie version of 'Shopaholic' novels is style-addictive

Patricia Field, the woman behind the look of 'Sex and the City,' comes up with quirky, colorful clothes for 'Confessions of a Shopaholic'

ANY CHICK flick with a wedding scene cues calls for that "ugly bridesmaid dress."

By Cheche V. Perez

WHEN THE MOVIE will have long been forgotten, all that shall remain are psychedelic mental images of the quirky, colorful clothes, those insane, vertiginous heels, and purses, purses galore that would break the resolve of even the most resolute recessionistas.

Such is the talent of Patricia Field, who once more takes costume-designer credit for Touchstone Pictures' "Confessions of a Shopaholic," hitting local screens on Feb. 18. The veteran stylist, of course, named International movie 11

TALK about grand entrance. "Shopaholic" begins with Becky schlepping around Manhattan in the ensemble: Zac Posen dress; Donna Cade jacket; Todd Oldham belt; Gucci purse and scarf and Nicky Hilton gold boots from Japan.

Confessions of Isla Fisher

In this exclusive interview, actress Isla Fisher talks about the movie, shopping and the pressures of being Rebecca Bloomwood

WHAT KIND OF girl is Rebecca?

Rebecca Bloomwood is one of the most charming heroines in any kind of story. She is a girl with lots of wonderful qualities and one gigantic flaw. She can't stop shopping. She's constantly getting into messes but is ingenious enough to get out of them. Oh, my gosh, she is incredible. She just wants to make the world beautiful. She has a brilliant imagination, she is someone who is so self-deprecating, so humble and sweet, but at the same time she unfortunately ends up in trouble. She just loves to shop. I love that heroine. You know, people refer to the great Ruth Weldon (Sophie Kinsella) series as 'chick lit' but I prefer to call it 'role lit' because she is such a funny writer.

How extreme is her flaw? Most women will relate to this passion for shopping, won't they?

It gets pretty bad, it definitely does. Rebecca is somebody who is just like all of us, shopping picks her up, cheers her up when she's down. She always thinks the needs something new and she is always like a child in a candy store when she's shopping.

Sportingly, she loves fashion, doesn't she?

She loves fashion and I would say it is fantastic working with Patricia Field and getting to wear all these amazing clothes. Rebecca is quite eclectic, she doesn't always go for designer labels; she will shop around and get a vintage accessory to match with something. She goes for different styles and looks.

She has also picked some amazing designer outfits from Todd Oldham to Zac Posen to Gucci to Versace, to Prada to Dolce and Gabbana. It is a wonderful mix of the greatest designers. I have learned so much

CONTINUED >>

A RED HOT VALENTINE WITH CLOSE UP AND THE SM MALL OF ASIA

Celebrate a romantic Valentine's Day with lots of music and love in the SM Mall of Asia and Close Up's Red Hot Valentine on February 14 at 6:00 PM at the Seaside Boulevard of the SM Mall of Asia.

You'll be in the mood for love with the perfect setting by the Bay, and music from the three hottest bands in the country as Rock Meets Romance. Alternative band Bamboo rocks with their new album Tomorrow Becomes Today. Pupil is top billed by Ely Buendia, who was recently awarded as the MTV Rising Star of the Month, and special guest band Sponge Cola introduces their new album Pyaso in this rare joint concert.

Joining them will be singer and songwriter Rico Blanco, who returns to the music scene with his new album Your Universe, and the 50 piece Metro Philharmonic Orchestra, who will be adding a classical vibe to the performance.

Sealing the event with a kiss will be Close Up's love fest, the country's biggest and most romantic kissing festival. This new iconic love fest gathers together lovebirds 18 years and above from all over the country who experience the thrill of a midnight kiss, as well as breaking a world record for the most number of kissing couples.

Get up close with your special someone in the SM Mall of Asia and Close Up's Red Hot Valentine celebration at the mall's Seaside Boulevard on February 14 at 6:00 PM. This red hot event is held in cooperation with McDonald's with Red Horse Beer as the Official Beer Sponsor, and with special thanks to TGIF Friday's. Official radio partners include Home Radio 97.9, UR 105.9, and NU107.

50 piece Metro Philharmonic Orchestra

Rico Blanco

Bamboo

Pupil

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IN THIS ISSUE

Raymond Red returns with 'Himpapawid' /G2

Stars cite their favorite romantic movies

CHIA. Waiting for her Prince Charming to sweep her off her feet.

By Nina P. Aviles

IF YOU COULD WATCH ONLY one romantic film, which would it be? For the celebrities on whom we addressed this question, the answer didn't come easy. Bea, ABS-CBN's top teen star, Kim Chiu, had a ready answer... "Prince and Me"...because she said she could relate to it, and imagined herself playing Jolie Sebel character being pursued by the dashing Luke Mably.

Kim explains: "Favorites ko po ung 'Prince and Me' dahil ung role ng love story. It's a modern fairy tale, at parang ako 'yung girl—simple lang at nagsisimula pangarap, waiting for her Prince Charming to sweep her off her feet!"

MAGDIWAGAL. In search of unconditional love.

The extremely lovelorn Julissa Magdiwagal is partial to movies that examine ideal relationships, like the one depicted in Nick Cassavetes' "The Notebook." She tells us, "It's my favorite movie because it shows the unconditional love shared by a couple who defies seemingly insurmountable odds."

Incurable romantic

The romantic indoctrinator responsible for Ryan Gosling and Rachel McAdams is also the romantic movie of choice of "Shutterbelt" alumnus, Kirby de Jesus, who recently won raves for his out-of-the-box performance in "Pagpag: Boy Nanay Anak." The insistent idol says he's an incurable romantic who wants the love stories he watches to inspire him—and that's exactly what "The Notebook" does to him.

Pat were also impressed with the choices of two of our favorite actors—Gina Alajar and Tommy Abuel—that's why we enjoy "talking shop" with them when time permits: Gina is drawn to the idea of aimsing viewing the course of the lives of two people who are meant to be together.

Gina intimates, "My favorite romantic movie is 'Ito Ang Isaiah's Tulong in Love,' starring Meryl Streep and Robert

STARS G2

"HIMPAPAWID." A call of the clown.

RED. "All my ideas are rooted in Filipino traditions."

Raymond Red returns with 'Himpapawid'

By Rica Arevalo

NEWS ABOUT RAYMOND Red's upcoming film, "Himpapawid" (Skies) first came out on the website of Variety. Finally, after lying low in filmmaking for some years, Red is back. He set aside some ambitious ideas and tapped longtime producer Roger Garcia, to collaborate on a project he describes as a "call of the times," which will use the latest Red One digital camera system (utilized by Steven Soderbergh for his latest film, "Che").

Alternative approach

Raymond shares: "I was able to pull together different people who believe in me as a filmmaker. It gives me a different kind of 'high' to know that I have full creative control over my movies as I continue to demonstrate an alternative approach to filmmaking through coproductions."

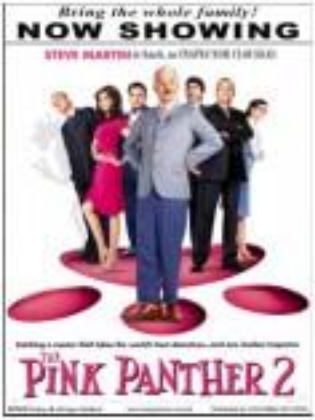
"Himpapawid" stars Read Arellano as a desperate dad trying to hijack a plane. It's inspired by a news story that recounts an incident in 2000 when a man jumped out of an airborne plane using an improvised parachute to escape.

"The ultimate goal of many filmmakers is to show their movies to a wider audience or in bigger venues. The purpose is to communicate well. I believe in world cinema. All my ideas are rooted in Filipino traditions. The material is relevant, and I want to share it with everyone," adds the Cinema selectee.

Why didn't he cast a major star? He answers: "I've always wanted to do a film with Read. He's talented and sensitive, and he's learned the ropes before diving on a visual artist in the UK." Arellano was last seen in Lav Diaz's "Melancholia."

Red thinks that the viewing habits of the new generation are changing. He explains: "Moving images are everywhere: giant LCDs, iPods, advertising screens, supermarket cabinets, the Internet, video games and mobile media. We're being bombarded with images!"

Inc, for him, there's a down side to digital technology. He notes: "Some independent filmmakers have become major players in Hollywood, but the problem now is that there's too much content—there's too much trash or shlock! It can very well happen to us if we're not careful. So, here's considered advice to our filmmakers. Know your purpose!"



G. BELLANO. Plays a desperate man who attempts to hijack a plane.

ARJO, AND ALAMAR. Hopeless romantics.

Stars...

From page G1

before. I like it because it's about two people finding love at the wrong time. Because they're already attached, they sacrifice their own happiness and chance to be with their families—until they run into each other when they're single again!

Possibilities

"The film's optimism is inspiring, and the possibilities it presents are soul food for hopeless romantics like me. It's saying that if two people are really meant for each other, love and destiny will reunite you when the right time comes."

Tommy chose two films from different cinematic eras: Leo McCarey's five-Oscar-winning "An Affair to Remember," starring Cary Grant and Deborah Kerr, and Nora Ephron's memorable 1993 rom-com, "Sleepless in Seattle." He explains, "They're timeless. I like them because of their appealing stars, believable acting, romantic locales and great theme songs. A romantic movie has to be believable for viewers to empathize with its characters."

Then, Tommy adds playfully: "I like the film movie because it has all the ingredients of a romantic movie. I saw it when I was very young, naive and stupidly romantic. And, I like the second one because I am still stupidly romantic!"

DE JESUS. Great love stories inspire him.

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HUMAN FOLK, HIROMI'S SONICBLOOM,
LAURENCE ELDER BAND, SPYRO GYRA

FESTIVAL DAY 2 • MARCH 2
ROCKWELL TENT, 5:30PM
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Hollywood fears piracy may thrive in economic crisis

WASHINGTON—COPYRIGHT PIRACY could take a bigger toll on US movies in the current global economic slowdown, including in China, whose nine out of 10 DVDs sold are pirated, Hollywood's top lobbyist said recently.

"This is a high-priority issue," said Motion Picture Association of America head Jim Gilchrest, who expressed concern that the dire financial situation would make pirated movies more popular on the streets and online.

"If you look at the situation, the current economic crisis makes this problem much more serious than before," he told a forum. "If we don't protect IPR (intellectual property rights), our economic losses will be far worse."

US studios are audited each $6 billion in annual losses due to piracy but the total global cost to the motion picture industry is three times as high, said Gilchrest, a former Democratic congressman and agriculture secretary in the Clinton administration.

"About $2.7 billion of these losses occur in China," he said.

Crackdown

While anti-television drive about $60 billion to annual US economic activity and support 1.2 million American jobs, he said at the forum held by the Center for Strategic and International Studies.

Unlike the burgeoning US trade deficit in goods, Gilchrest said American movies run a surplus with virtually every country, with about 60 percent of box office and home video receipts coming from outside the United States.

Citing the James Bond movie, "Quantum of Solace," as an example, Gilchrest said 70 percent of the $500

"KUNG FU PANDA" is the highest-grossing animated film in Chinese history

million it grossed as of last month came from overseas after it dominated the weeks of global box office.

Gilchrest urged China to step up its crackdown on copyright piracy and allow more US movies into the world's most populous nation, saying greater access would enable US studios to invest more in local ventures.

Of the hundreds of US films released annually, "no more than 20 are permitted to be seen in Chinese theaters," he said. "This feeds the black market for clever reasonably 'forbidden' films."

Washington failed to resolve the market access issue through bilateral channels and has filed a complaint with the World Trade Organization (WTO) over broad Chinese import limits on "cultural goods," such as books, music and DVDs.

Most successful

US officials argued that China agreed to free up these trading rights for non-Chinese companies when it joined the WTO.

Gilchrest said he expected a WTO ruling on the dispute "pretty soon."

"We hope we will win, the government has a very good case here."

The most successful US film this year in China was "Hong Fe Hero"—the highest grossing animated film in Chinese history.

"The panda, of course, is the national symbol. The film celebrates Chinese culture and it was made in America," Gilchrest noted, quoting a report suggesting that censorship was a key stumbling block to China's film industry.

"Many asked why China couldn't have made this film. The answer given is a negative unequivocally was 'China has first-class directors, first-class playwrights, first-class actors, but it's a shame that we have censorship by government officials.'"

The censors, according to the report, "would object to a panda with weight problems," he said. AFP

Survivors encourage cervical cancer prevention for more Filipino women

"No woman should have to succumb to cervical cancer. Thanks to GlaxoSmithKline (GSK), the way to prevent this cancer is finally within reach," said Solmon Villanueva, cervical cancer survivor and advocate, when she learned about the near-reduction of GSK's cervical cancer vaccine, Cervarix. Villanueva is now offering to cervical cancer vaccine with as much as a 60 percent reduction from its original price.

A sales and marketing executive, Solmon was diagnosed with cervical cancer in 2001 when she was 39 years old. The high incidence and stress of her job contributed to lowering her immune system and made her more susceptible to infection by the Human Papillomavirus (HPV), the healthcare cause of cervical cancer.

Luckily, her friends and family rallied around her encouraging her to not her job or take days off from her strength for the months of chemotherapy and treatment up. Initial Tess. Solmon is cancer free, working as a freelance real estate broker and advertising consultant. She is also giving time to her new mission, spreading the word about cervical cancer prevention.

During her talk at a recent cervical cancer prevention activity, Solmon stressed regular screening and vaccination are keys to help detect and prevent cervical cancer.

"I thought I was immune, since I family get sick. I was strong and healthy. And a fatsoy, I was pushing my body and pushing my body without realizing that my immune system was getting weaker and weaker."

Screening is the form of Pap smears are important for early detection of cancer and precancerous changes in the cervix. Though it has been around for the past 50 years, it has not caused a significant reduction in cervical cancer incidence in developing countries such as the Philippines, where 6,000 cases are diagnosed each year. With a survival rate of only 44%, more than half will die of the disease within 5 years. Experts believe that screening together with vaccination will reduce the incidence of cervical cancer further than with just screening alone.

GSK, together with other cervical cancer survivors and vaccination heroes that the urine reduction will encourage more women to take responsibility for their health by protecting themselves against the second highest killer cancer in the country.

"Having gone through it myself, I really want to contact the women to remind that this cancer can be prevented," said Dr. Jane Ildefonso, cervical cancer survivor and vaccine advocate for Brandmakers, a multi-sectoral movement for cervical cancer prevention. "I could tell my colleagues to get vaccinated and they would say pag kayo ken (like they will save up for it). With the reduced price, there's no need to delay anymore."

As a concerned parent, cervical cancer survivor Ildefonso (Justine) recognizes the importance of prevention in ensuring the survival of cervical cancer, especially in light of the fact that women of all ages are at risk of infection. "It's a good gift for my children. Now we have the opportunity to live together for a long time."

GSK's cervical cancer vaccine's indication, as approved by the Bureau of Food and Drugs, is for females 10 years of age onwards. It protects against the two most common cancer-causing HPV types, 16 and 18, which together are responsible for over 70 percent of cervical cancer cases in Asia Pacific. It has also shown efficacy against persistent infection caused by 12 other cancer-causing HPV types beyond HPV 16 and 18.

Clinical data also demonstrates that GSK's cervical cancer vaccine provides this protection for at least six and a half years, the longest duration of protection reported to date for a cervical cancer vaccine currently available. Everyone knows for women as it is estimated that up to 80% will acquire a Human Papillomavirus infection in their lifetime.

Now, more Women can brave the fight against cervical cancer.

In November 2008, GlaxoSmithKline took a brave step and made their cervical cancer vaccine affordable for more women. This means more mothers, sisters, wives, and friends can now be protected from the 2nd highest killer cancer of women in our country. We laud GSK's pioneering efforts and celebrate that together we are stronger against cervical cancer.

BraveHearts

WALGITA LAVEEN SALON HealthToday personal OBSERVER

@MVSolon

Conversates, grudgeges, the soon future and other boob-tube booboos

By Nestor U. Torre

HOST: WHAT IS THE FIRST WAY TO SHARE sure that a marriage will last for a long time?

Guest: Above all, don't hold any grudges.

(—That's a lot of grudges!)

* * *

Host: We keep getting different reports, so what's the real score? Are you and your girlfriend getting married this year, or not?

Guest: Yes—probably—ciguro.

(Hey, that's really definite!)

* * *

Host: How can you tell if the President is getting angry?

Guest: By the way the chat conversation, you actually know that she's already angry.

(Conversation? Congratulations, you've just coined a new word.)

* * *

Famous father

Host: When don't we know about your boyfriend? For example, for the former's benefit, among the celebrities?

(Billy would learning that he's of "erstwhile" is cut?)

* * *

Host: Bebe gulf any regarding sport at Presidente—Aseh bisch basketball?

(Obvious he?)

* * *

Film awards you-nomic: The Best Supporting Actress goes to he—founder of in-terest?

(He's immortal!)

* * *

Host: Is it true that there are more overweight people now?

Guest: Yes, unfortunately, my age obesity starts, dammit.

(He's reticent to answer...)

* * *

Host: What is the objective of your talk?

Guest: From experience, we know that the only way to get action from our officials is if they are pushed into the wall.

(Hearing banners, holes mapkan ang effected.)

* * *

Host: Bebe Aseh pursuit is meme of TV colleagues?

Colleal: Sometimes! Our ang ripples.

(Aseh!)

BOOB TUBE

BooBoos

Difference

Host: What is the difference between the politics and the behave?

Guest: It's all because of gender, e—ang politics Adult, pag behave e, babae.

(—Aseh!)

* * *

Host: Why are you intending your campaign spokesmen gangs to your neighborhood?

Guest: Because they're dangerous.

Host: Why are they dangerous?

Guest: Because they're mine!

(Pe-comment po ba?)

* * *

Host: When will you announce your decision to run for senator?

Guest: Hopefully, in the near future. (Don't say for senator—please!)

SATURDAY Special

Love really makes the (entertainment) world go 'round

By Nestor U. Torre

THE WORLD "officially" celebrates love today, Feb. 14, but romance is showcased everyday in the entertainment universe. In fact, romance—and its French-kissing cousin, seduction and lust—are the engines that drive most of the movies, TV shows, recordings and plays that are produced for our communal delectation.

Snippets of reality

Interestingly, it didn't start out this way. For instance, when the movie camera was invented, all it was initially intended for was to record commonplace snippets of reality—street scenes, fires, rallies, marine battles, etc.

Only later did it start to tell stories—and quite instinctively, they quickly took on a romantic coloration.

And they haven't ended their love affair with love since, as recent movies from Hollywood like this month's "Slumdog Millionaire" clearly show.

The same goes for television. The first TV cameras were used only for advertising purposes. Soon enough, however, people started looking for longer and more involving viewing fare, and TV began to tell stories—many of which, predictably enough, were romantic in nature.

That was par for the traditional storytelling course, after all. Even the old Testament occasionally bristles with tales of valor and even passion, and Shakespeare's Romeo had to have his Juliet.

Why has this always been so? Why do even war and horror movies speak in subplots involving Tammy? Why does the Beast plan for his Beauty, and even a grotesque ogre like Shrek dare to capture the heart of the feisty Princess Fiona? Why do viewers of all sorts of film types practically demand a love quotient for them to completely embrace a production?

"Blame" it, not on mythic romanticized factors like beauty, grace, and metric, but, a meeting of the heart and mind—but, or something even more basic and elemental. Mankind's need to propagate itself, in order to survive and flourish.

LOVE'S a universal language in the entertainment universe.

Reason

Yes, it may not be romantically romantic to think about it, but the prime reason why love is such a big part of all sorts of entertainment universal is due to its essential, consequent and necessary function of procreation.

Love stories make viewers unconsciously yearn for their own version of partners, so they too fall in love, get married and have babies who will ensure the survival of the human race.

LOVE, 4E

Helen Gamboa rides 'teleserye' bandwagon

By Rosay M. Llanera

HELEN GAMBOA FEELS VERY PRIVILEGED to be included in the cast of the new sitcom, "Tayong Dalawa." Most of the comics we've seen on-set here and abroad. To name a few—Gerald de Rosario, Anna Liza, Pinky Davis, Mylene Dizon, Ipoh Mendoza, Art Manio and Gina Duyan. Helen recalls with fondness how much she enjoyed working with Pamela in Joey Gosiengfiao's comedy "Ang Boyfriend Kong Bakla," many years ago.

Helen herself was a recipient of a Best Actress Urian award for her performance in 1990's "Hot Cunting Babae."

The well-loved actress reveals: "Totally has always been my priority, at earth long dating on it, because I know that acting and raising a family can't be combined. I've never regretted that decision. But, my children have all grown up. It was my husband who urged me to redebut his projects again, provided they're good.

"For instance, Ariel paraphernalia my mother-in-law role in as 'Tayong Dalawa.' I play a need architecture mother who will do anything for her daughter.

"Only recently, my husband and I watched 'The Changeling,' starring Angelina Jolie as a mother searching for her lost son, and I loved the role so much. I hope may mag-offer sa akin ng gumawa ng ate ng role. Who knows, baka may indie producer na mag-hand pictures ng pamasa?"

Working relationship

He talked about her working relationship with the three young leads in the sitcom: "How serious are they with their roles? "I heard many stories about unprofessionalism among young stars today. But, as fate time that Chin, Gerald Anderson and Julie Concio, they report to the set well-prepared, have nothing na mag-ing na ano."

GAMBOA. "My family has always been my priority.

How would she handle unprofessionalism on the set? How was it during her time? "Mahalaga ko sino-sino nang comes at pagsasabihan ko magandang paraan. May mga pagkakataon din dating my time, or ang producer ni mismo ang kumakausap sa aktor. One producer solved the problem by imposing a fine when stars reported late for shooting. The fine got bigger by the hour. Hindi nauso sa coming 'salary fine.' Iwas sa talo.

Film buffs choose their favorite 'vintage' stars

By Bobi Corrales

PARLEY PALS AT THE UP ALUMNI Association office, I asked Nini Teador Jurgo who her favorite vintage actors were. It took her only a moment to reply: "Madeleine Sherwyn and Hedwig Parker." Such aces, both of whom were nominated for Oscars, brought to mind strong memories of those classic black-and-white films.

I remember Sherwyn in the role of Robert Taylor, who had a substantial affair with the alluring Vera Gardner. Still, the Silky Beauties got back at her philandering hubby years later when she had a scandalous (secret) affair with Robert Wagner, who was many years her junior.

Themes

Nini liked Sherwyn because of her versatility, as well as the variety of her movies' themes. In most of them, she was the sweeping modern woman—independent-minded and always up against the male-dominated world—and she succeeded despite its numerous obstacles.

Eleanor Parker was also a great actress who had great support with her audience, Nini noted. Named which film she remembered Parker best in, she replied, "Interrupted Melody," in which she portrayed Australian opera singer Marjorie Lawrence. It didn't surprise me that Nini chose Parker, because she is a UP College of Music graduate and a contemporary of Evelyn Rhodes, Eleanor Collier, Carmelita de Leon, Johnny Romero and Vim Dominguez.

Next, I asked Salvacion Calvan, an entomologist from UP Los Baños, who his favorites were. Being fond of Filipino movies of yore, Ms. Calvan replied: "Tito Guerrero and Tessie Quintana. Aside, especially, Tito. (They were husband?)" In fact, he saw Tito during a shooting of the movie, "Sa Isang Sulyap Ma, Tito," in Los Baños. He added that even Pancho had dating experience.

ETERNITY. To be or...

Frank Cuenco, executive director of the UP Alumni Association, declared: "I was the producer of the Bella Rayes Fans Club in the National Capital Region (NCR)." He finally met his idol many years later, in the company of still another DJ-icon, Nestor Torre.

New contract stars

Another "evolution": "Ha, ha, I ate my heart," Cuenco says so coolly. (I see Ms. 21 is Jennifer Garbanzo's co-conner.) "When we entered in death, Frank said: 'Aba, pare-pare-noon. Ang I-iwas good-looking them.'" In search of new contract stars, Sampaguita Pictures held such a contest in Intramuros. Fidel A. Reyes's team produced 98. Mr. 1 and 2 were young Amalia Fuentes was heralded in the No. 1.

"So, why didn't you become an actor?" demanded Dr. Calvan. "Sipon, ill-fit matrimony fortunes." (Perhaps, you wouldn't sing.) He quickly replied: "Ah, no-no-no-no-no! 'Tayong ng Tinginhan.' Ako pwa-pwa 'PALAKO!'" That information came as a surprise, as never so suspected that we had a former star in the making in our midst!

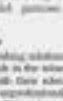
Therefore, I wasn't surprised when Frank cited the very pretty Gilda del Sol as his favorite local actress. He then added that his favorite Hollywood actress was Ann Blyth, who sang in such films as "The Great Caruso" and "The Student Prince."

Alkaline water for better health

AMONG THE MOST IMPORTANT FACTORS related to a person's health are the quality of air he breathes, the water he drinks and the food he eats. One's health is determined by the efficiency by which we can flush out the acid buildup or wastes out our body. When we take in food, much of it is absorbed and turned into nutrients that translate to growth, energy and muscle-building. A portion becomes waste that needs to be flushed out.

While that residue in the body eventually turns into acid and starts wreaking our organs. That's when diseases like diabetes, high cholesterol and blood pressure, acid reflux, gout, uric acid and heartburn start. Most people take antacids to remove the gases produced by the acid buildup. It's no wonder roughage like veggies, whole grains and salads is good for us. Aside from it being alkaline, it's also easy to flush out.

Acid buildup also happens in the cells, which is one of the basic theories of diseases. To be able to picture it better, compare it to an aquarium. The fish are like our body's cells—they're fed and they eat the food. Some of that food makes them healthy and



WORD OF MOUTH

Sandy Daza

some are flushed out in the water as waste. As waste builds up, the water becomes polluted and turns acidic, and the fish start getting sick.

Balance

To revitalize the health of the fish, the water needs to be changed and its acidity needs to be neutralized. Only when this balance is achieved can the fish go back to being healthy. The same happens in the human cell vs. body. The food and drinks we consume are digested for all kinds of body functions, and the waste will be flushed out. It's this waste buildup that need to acid and starts the development of diseases. We need to neutralize the acidity to restore the body's healthy and balanced state.

Seventy-five percent of our body is water. It goes without saying that the quality of the water we put in our body is very important. I used to believe that water was just plain water. Not true. Most waters—even mineral—is acidic. Softdrinks are highly acidic. There are some waters that have a bit of alkalinity in their water, but it's loaded with chlorine. Alkaline water neutralizes this acid buildup in fluids and harmful ions.

In 1985, a company in Japan called Enagic developed a water system called Kangen. Kangen means "return to origin." The invention was inspired by four hundred glacier water sources in Hawaii, Mexico, Scandinavia, Germany and Malay and Lucies in France. Japanese scientists observed that hundreds of thousands of people flocked to those places to get "miracle waters" from springs. They noticed that many of the residents in these locations lived up to a healthy old age and live were getting sick.

Upon closer study, they discovered that

SEE WATER ON P4

Love really makes...

From page 8

Of course, now that the world's population has hit six billion, the human race is in no danger of passing out. But, mankind's survival instinct is so strong that it continues to sustain its election roll, regardless.

The point to all this is that the "need" to love and "engender" is so powerful that the entertainment industry can keep banking on it through the years and decades, making it one of the best budgets against inflation and crisis (a glitch of Depression).

Clichés

For the rooms, we keep getting seduced by tales of love—would you still say've had it up to here with all of these romantic and sensual clichés.

—And even common human characters aren't spared. In "Beverly Hills Chihuahua," the poodles fell yelp-tagly to love. And in "WALL-E," the robot protagonist pines for—another robot whose unsurpassed visual sensors tip his cold, lonely planet, effectively making his world go round!

Love song lyrics as pop poetry

By Nestor U. Torre

MANY PEOPLE ARE LEERY OF poems, because they find them too "artistic," bakakain, abstract, private and difficult to understand and empathize with. However, we may not know it, but poetry is actually part of our everyday lives—by virtue of the lyrics of love songs we hear all the time on radio and TV—and, most pertinently, during this Valentine month.

Trouble is, many song lyrics are trite, melodramatic, lush and simply downright bad, so they give love songs a bad rap. But, if we look back to the songs that have found a special place in our individual and collective hearts, we can easily discover the accessible romantic poetry that has become part of our lives.

On this day of love, therefore, let's recall just a few of the best song lyrics that vividly the love and passion that make us so vividly and vulnerably human (excerpts):

We've Only Just Begun

We've only just begun to live
White lace and promises
A kiss for luck and we're on our way
And, see, we've just begun
Before the dating nice we fly
So many roads to choose
We want our walking and learn to run
And, see, we've just begun

My One and Only Love

What man my only Sook ruth is
But, I can't help falling in love with you
Shall I say
Would it be safe
If I can't help falling in love with you?

My Funny Valentine

My funny Valentine
Sweet comic Valentine
You make me smile with my heart
Your looks are laughable
Unphotographable
Yet, you're my favorite work of art

Is your figure less than Greek
Is your mouth a little weak
When you open it to speak
Are you sure?

I'll Stand By You

Oh, why do you look so sad?
Tears are in your eyes
Come sit and come to me now
Don't be ashamed to cry
Let me see you through
'Cause I've seen the darkside, too
When the night falls on you
You don't know what to do
Don't, nothing you confess
Could make me love you less.

I Hope That I Don't Fall in Love with You

Well, I hope that I don't fall in love with you

'Cause falling in love just makes me blue

Well, the music plays and you display your heart for me to see,
I find a love and now I hear you calling out for me.

And I hope that I don't fall in love with you,
Well, the summer is crowded, people everywhere
And I wonder, should I offer you a chair?

Well, if you sit down with this old clown,
Take that kiss and break it
Before the evening's gone sorry,
I think that we could make it
And I hope that I don't fall in love with you.

Softly, As I Leave You

Softly, I will leave you softly
For my heart should break if
you should wake and see me go

So I leave you softly long before you wake me
Long before your arms can beg me stay
For one more hour or one more day

After all the years, I can't bear the time to fall
So softly, as I leave you there:

Alkaline water for better health

From page H5

the glacier water was alkaline. It had an antioxidant (amount of minus 800 ORP (oxidation reduction potential). According to scientists, for an antioxidant to be effective, it has to have an ORP of at least minus 200 to minus 400. Positive ORP is an oxidant, therefore it's not good for the body. Oxidants accelerate the aging process. A diseased apple will soon turn brown in a process called oxidation. An antioxidant does not stop aging, it only slows it down.

Antioxidant

Many people who drink alkaline water look young because of the antioxidant that delays aging. In Hehe because the water had an ORP of negative 880, residents started bottling it, but realized that the ORP disappears after a few hours. The Lourdes water was also tested and was found out to be alkaline, as well.

The problem with these water types was their inconvenient quality. Armed with this knowledge, Japanese scientists headed by Dr. Hirohisa of Kyushu University developed the Rangen water machine, which has the properties of the mentioned, plus alkaline and antioxidant. Alkaline water is has another quality that makes the flushing out of acids even more effective. Typical water has 15 to 16 molecules, which take time to digest.

But, Rangen water only has five or six molecules, so it's easily absorbed and hydrates the body immediately. The more hydrated you are, the healthier the skin or body is.

Process

The Rangen water machine does five things consecutively. First, it takes your ordinary tap or faucet water and purifies it. Second, it makes the water an antioxidant with a negative ORP of about minus 796. Third, it reduces the water clusters from 16 to five molecules, so the water immediately goes to various parts of the body and hydrates them. And, finally, through a process called electrolysis, it separates tap water into acid and alkaline water. It's the alkaline water that we drink. The minerals it gets in contact with acid deposits, it neutralizes it and eventually flushes it out through pee and poo.

A baby's body is 80 percent water. Breast milk is 87 percent water. Human cells are hydrated, they have impassable skin. Some testimonies speak of severe pain initially when drinking Rangen (especially in the joints, calcium deposits are caused by the acid buildup), then pain subsides and eventually disappears.

My doctor was shocked at the results. I was diagnosed with high cholesterol and I was almost on the grave maintenance medicine. Sometime introduced Rangen water to me, so I used it to replace the normal water I usually drank. During the first two nights, I couldn't sleep. I had so much energy.

When it was time for my next blood test, my doctor was ecstatic about the results. "Continue what you're doing. Your cholesterol level has dropped significantly."

My friend, Raymund, was taking medicine for gout, high cholesterol, high blood pressure and diabetes. After three months on Rangen water, he no longer needed to take his medicines. His readings became normal, and he lost weight, too.

Weight loss

This is how it was explained to me: When we experience acid build-up, the acid starts attacking our organs. What the fat cells do is, they surround the organs to protect them from the attacking acid. When the acid is neutralized by the alkaline water and is flushed out, the fat cells are no longer needed, so they get flushed out, as well, which explains the weight loss. Even more interesting is the fact that cancer cells thrive not in an alkaline but in an acidic environment.

The latest from alkaline water machines that came out after Rangen. My personal take on this: 75 percent of our body is water, so I want to put only the best in it. Rangen is considered a medical device by the Ministry of Health in Japan. It's used by many hospitals there to cure various diseases. So, I choose this brand, because it works for me. It's the best investment I ever made for my health!

For inquiry and free demonstration, e-mail candybalan@yahoo.ca, or text 0929 665-0949. This health knowledge that I'm relaying is derived from the lectures of Dr. Steve Carpenter, from testimonies of other people and my personal experience. Visit www.kangenwaterinformation.com.

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3 PUSH
4 WHEN I MET YOU
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Brittany Unveils the New Amore Series of Homes

The very thing constant in life, some men say, is change. With the right attitude, it provides the opportunity to evolve and improve for the better – whether one is at the beginning of building a new life or embarking on their twilight years.

Always at the forefront of innovation, mainstream real property developer Brittany Corporation continues to stay ahead of its clientele – diversifying its needs long before the demand arises. A proud member of the country's largest home builder, Vista Land & Lifescapes, Inc., Brittany has unveiled the "New Amore Series of Homes" at the 24-hectare Amore enclave at Portofino. This features new kinds of condo homes in response to this changing market.

"Brittany decided to come out with the new Amore series to address the changing demands of the market. Amore's target markets are retirees and starting families. The vision for Amore was to provide this grandeur and luxury of Portofino at a price that is more practical to families or couples that don't necessarily need the bigger homes available in the Alabang Collection or Courtyards of Portofino. The homes are scaled but the quality of the design, craftsmanship and materials are still first class," said Brittany's Chief Operations Officer Mary Lee Sadsad.

Five elegantly designed, rustic Italian homes

Amore at Portofino is a unique exclusive enclave inspired by the rustic Tuscan region of Italy – the birthplace of the Renaissance. It sits on prime, family windswept terrain nestled by trees and can easily be accessed through three major road arteries. It is seven minutes away from the central business district at Alabang and 30 minutes from Makati.

The new Amore series offers five designs that exemplify the Italian spirit infused with the conveniences of modern living. Niccolo, Montano, Lauretto, Franco and Giorgio range from 14 bedroom to 250sqm in total floor area. Packages range from P5.1 million to P13 million. Within this enclave is a unique feature developed by Brittany, called Clusters. A Cluster is an assemblage of 4 single-detached residential units with a common head-of driveway and a landscaped pocket garden. This landscape feature provides a quaint, rustic and romantic ambience – providing a sense of community without sacrificing security and privacy.

"We all know that the Italians are passionate about life, family and gatherings. That's how we came out with this initial cluster concept, something rustic and relaxed where families can gather together and just spend time with one another. For the new series, we just enhanced our initial concept with better-planned spaces," Sadsad explained.

Change in design

In the new Amore series, we were able to enhance the original layouts. A good example is the Amore model – the old design included a balcony in the second bedroom and none in the master's bedroom. In the improved design renamed Giorgio, the balcony at the second floor is now part of the master's bedroom. Another modification that is favorable to the market is the addition of more space in every room which was still by utilizing some elements without compromising aesthetics, giving the homeowners more freedom to move around," Sadsad continued.

The new series boasts of designs that are tailored to the specific needs of the market as well as an improved space plan. Overcoming the challenge of identifying the needs of the market, Brittany had undertaken extensive research and has embraced the needed changes which resulted to this new Amore series of homes.

Top-rate features and amenities

Complementing these design changes are premium utilities for its residents. To ensure an unobstructed view of the landscape, cables for power and communication were laid underground. Perimeter fences and buffer trees line the boundary lots to ensure security apart from the 24-hour security system that safeguards the entire community. Deep wells and water reservoirs ensure a round-the-clock water service. Most of all, a professional property management team ensures the community and makes sure that the high standards are maintained.

"The enhanced Amore series is a testament to this resource spirit that has driven the success of all Brittany properties – one that is both proactive and responsive to change. Furthermore it is an affirmation of our commitment to the creation of beautiful homes at all times," concluded Sadsad.

Brittany Corporation is a maverick real estate developer of innovative and creative lifescapes. Its eclectic and vibrant portfolio includes CrossWinds, Portofino, Georgia Club, Mirasol at Greenfield, Ki, Mosaic at Joyous, and Avant at The Fort. With masterplanned developments steeped in character, stylistic and thematic appeal, rich architectural details and excellent craftsmanship, it sustainably and continuously reinvents the most real estate landscape.

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Amore AT PORTOFINO

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SATURDAY Special

PHILBLACK. Romulo Neri says kissing onscreen is far from sexual and personal.

Aga kisses and tells

THE HEARTTHROB with Marisol Santana (left).

By Rica Evalle

IT'S VALENTINE'S DAY. WHEN we sat down with Aga Muhlach two years ago to talk about fatherhood and his fairy-tale romance with wife Charlene Gonzalez, it was about the same time. For this year's Season of Giants, we decided to talk to the actor about something light (and fun): Kissing.

To earth Aga in a cheerful mood is as good as witnessing how warm and affectionate the staunchly private actor can get when you win his trust. Off the record moments come in spurts when the topic gets a little "sensitive," because he doesn't want to offend anybody.

With the help of Alonzo Muhlach, we had another chat with Aga to talk about "onscreen osculation techniques." After all, which actor could lay claim to sharing "professional" smooches with a more diverse lineup of actresses than the country's premier heartthrob himself?

Top actresses

Aga has seen women's hearts aflutter when he romanced some of the country's top actresses, like Vilma Santos ("Sinungaling Mong Puso"), Sharon Cuneta ("Kung Ako Na Lang Sana"), Regine Velasquez ("Dahil May Isang Ikaw"), Claudine Barretto ("Kailangan Kita"), Dawn Zulueta ("Dahil Kaniya Ako"), Lea Salonga ("Sana Maulit Muli"), Kristine Hermosa ("Oh My Life"), Maricel Soriano and Angelica Panganiban ("A Love Story"), and, most recently, Anne Curtis ("When Love Begins"). Up next: Angel Locsin. And, the list goes on—and on.

So was our experience the last time we interviewed Aga, we had a blast talking to the seemingly candid...and careful...man. (no idea about love and the sweet and intimate act of affection that always comes with it.

But, Aga swears that kissing onscreen is far from sweet or personal. He explains: "It's more technical than intimate, really. In my experience, kissing is something actors need to plan ahead. You can't rely on spontaneity to see you through kissing and love scenes...and it's nowhere near what you'd normally do in real life."

How does he prepare for it? Aga replies: "Long before the actual shoot, even as far back as the story conference, we already discuss

ASA/01

Ready for the world

by Bernet Dychangco

How is it possible that Singapore, a tiny island state, is one of the world's most prosperous nations? (The CIA World Factbook and Wikipedia list it 6th – ahead of the US – among the 10 richest countries in the world based on GDP per capita.)

With all that Singapore has overcome and achieved, it makes a strong case that it's all in the mind. Singapore may be a small country. But it has got big ambitions. It's not blessed with natural resources. But it, nonetheless, finds ways to prosper.

So, what is it about Singapore?

A lot of it – this ethos of positivism that breeds a 'can-do' attitude – has to be education. Early on after gaining its independence under challenging circumstances, Singapore invested heavily in education. Obviously, it has paid dividends. Today, Singapore's ascendancy in the global playing field is in sharp contrast to the place it physically occupies on the map. It has become a major regional economic hub around which the world revolves. Which may also account for why Singapore boasts world-class schools and educational programs.

It is certainly good news that this brand of education is now here in the Philippines through Singapore School Manila. SSM is an international school that adopts the Singaporean curriculum, known for its strength in math and Science. It offers a challenge-driven education, using modern pedagogical strategies that take away the pressure and trauma associated with conventional teaching methods. The curriculum is designed to give children a positive attitude towards learning. Students are made to feel at ease. It is believed that people perform better when they feel at ease in the knowledge that they can be themselves and will not be judged. Moreover, children are encouraged to speak out, ask questions and express their opinions. The school believes it's the only way for students to become active participants in the learning process and for instructors to ascertain comprehension. SSM teachers, for their part, motivate students to participate and act more as facilitators of student discussions. The school aims to empower students and make them believe in themselves. In enabling students, SSM puts the emphasis on being the best they can be rather than training them to compete with others. It is a more constructive and effective way to help them achieve their maximum capabilities. When it comes to discipline, it is enabled not through punishment but by explaining firmly but gently why certain behaviors are not acceptable.

SSM puts the emphasis on being the best they can be rather than training them to compete with others.

It is believed that people perform better when they feel at ease in the knowledge that they can be themselves and will not be judged.

In SSM, children are encouraged to speak out and express their opinions, while teachers motivate students and facilitate their discussions.

Concepts are learned through fun activities that allow for deeper learning and better retention.

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Love and lust

BOBB: PEOPLE SAY THEY LOVE YOU, but hurt you in so many ways—physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually. So, is it really love they experience or just lust's perverted manifestation—lust? Here's a checklist to see if it's one or the other:

1. Love is giving; lust is taking.
2. Love is unconditional; lust is filled with terms and conditions.
3. Love is forgiving and kind; lust is unforgiving and angry.
4. Love is sweet and happy; lust is painful and bitter.

All-encompassing

5. Love is expansive and all-encompassing; lust is limited and selfish.
6. Love seeks no reward and finds pleasure in giving freely, but demands returns in the form of attention or material things, and comes with many strings attached.
7. Love is gentle and sensitive; lust is harsh and insensitive.
8. Love increases; lust degrades.
9. Love is founded on the eternal and lasting; lust is focused on the temporary and perishable.
10. If a person's love is centered on the Supreme Beloved, he or she gets to experience the wonderful nature of real love. So, it's better to love than to lust?

LOTUS POND

R. Valenciano and S. Hamagachi

Nescafé Soundskool . . .

From page 14

Sun Shop at Mininop Cattleya

Sun Cellular's retail arm, The Sun Shop, recently opened at the Mininop Cattleya, Salcedo st., Legaspi Village, Makati City offering prepaid SIM packs, call cards and Sprint Load Reseller Kits.

It also accepts postpaid applications and bill payments, plus Sun Cellular's latest product, the Sun Broadband Wireless, a personal Internet that's fast, reliable and affordable. Call (02) 395-9999, or email the-sunshop@digitel.ph.

'Be My Valentine'

Coco Lucrel's concert-at-the-Trees, tonight is titled "Be My Valentine." Coco sings love songs in his inimitably unique way to the sweeping music of the Manila Philharmonic Orchestra. Call: 723-8428, or visit www.cocolucrel.com.

LAUREL. Sings at 'Valentine tonight.

Carmen Soriano at Captain's Bar

Sultry diva Carmen Soriano performs at the Mandarin Oriental Hotel's Captain's Bar on Feb. 20 with Jun Pellerino, and on March 7 with Anthony Castelo. The "should-see" show, titled "Romancing," is a Vera Cervetto and Events production. Call 891-9999 or 887-8181, loc. 620.

Free livelihood workshops

The Mr. Shpng at Tipuqa Cavanas offers free livelihood workshops at Starmall: Today at 2 p.m., "Sweet Pies Making" at Starmall Alabang; Feb. 21, "Kitchen Aids" and Feb. 28, "Marinada Snack Making" both at Starmall Edsa Shaw.

Tonight at Starmall Alabang, "Rhythm & Blues" features the talented Akabellas and the sexy Carousel Girls. Call 842-2513.

SORIANO. Typical "Romancing" at the Mandarin Oriental

'Monsters vs. Aliens'

For a bracing change of pace, Steve Wilkinson voice-acts the role of a commander in the fun animated feature, "Monsters vs. Aliens." In Blu-ray/sure, her character, Susan Murphy, is living a normal life, that is, when a rogue asteroid crashes into her, she joins the captured monster squad as the 50 foot tall Ginormica!

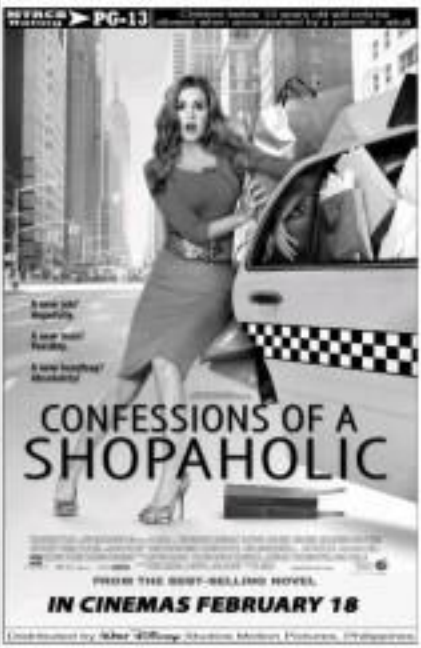
On Studio 23

Meet Asia's female Robin Hood, Jing-ay and join her in her adventures and misadventures in the new romantic comedy from Taiwan, "Hitchhiking Princess," weekdays at 5:15 p.m.

In addition, "Las Tonas" is now aired weekdays at 10 a.m.

'Sino Tayo'

Tonight on ONE-7, "Sino Tayo" host, Rowena Severino, invites broadcast journalists Mahi Pablo and Jiggy Manicad, to share their personal experience producing this year's New York Festivals Bronze World Medal Awardee—"Pinoys for Export" by "Reporter's Notebook."



THE HATERS stand with wife Charlene Gonzalez.

Aga . . .

(continued on page 31)

hour to go about it. It's hands-on when it comes to the stories and the treatment of sensitive portrayal of my movies, because I don't like cutting chances or making unnecessary messages.

"I make sure that my leading lady is very much involved with me by the time we need to do the take. You have to assure her that there's no malice involved, para hindi ajat mo-anyone (in the movie) get carried. It's easier and fastest when your partner is also a pro, like Vilma Santos, who knows the dos and don'ts of screen kissing."

Longest kiss

The multi-awarded actor goes the extra mile to make his leading ladies comfortable. For example, when it was time to shoot his kissing scene with Regine, he smashed some chips just before the scene, and it effectively broke the ice between them. After the take, Regine good-naturedly "protested": "Lecoy Chippy!" His kissing scene with the singer was also the longest he's ever done.

Who among his leading ladies is his favorite kisser? Any secret? With caution, he shared: "I loved all of them, because they brought something special to our collaborations. But, a fine example of an ideal screen partner would be Claudine Barretto, who was very open and professional about our intimate scenes in 'Kailangan Kita.' We share, capitalized the whole thing. Where should I bite her first? What if I reached her breasts by accident? That sort of thing."

Choices

When we asked Aga what his favorite romantic movie was, it was amusing to catch the sought-after romantic leading man initially in a tie for words. But, his choices ingrained in his memory. "Mapapaling maraming (there are too many)! I loved how the romance between the leads was developed in 'Meet Joe Black' and 'Legends of the Fall.' I found it very sensual, and the painful emotions the characters were through were truly palpable."

Two hours after we ended our chat, Aga was still roaming at most of his favorite romantic movies. "The Notebook," "Sleepless in Seattle," "Jerry Maguire," "When A Man Loves A Woman," "If You Dare," "Sisterhood," "Hero," "Serendipity" and "Unfaithful."

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2 VALKYRIE
3 WHEN I MET YOU
4 PINK PANTHER 2

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2 WHEN I MET YOU
3 THE ABANDONED
4 PINK PANTHER 2

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3 TRANSPORTER 3
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5 UNDERWORLD 3
6 VALKYRIE

BACOLOD

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2 VALKYRIE
3 WHEN I MET YOU
4 MY BLOODY VALENTINE
5 BRIDE WARS
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NOW SHOWING

LETTER DAY STORY: The coffee brand competition's winning band gets ready for the big time.

Nescafé Soundskool makeover transforms newcomers into musical stars

MONTAGE

THE 13 SEMIFINALIST BANDS IN THIS year's Nescafé Soundskool competition aren't the Elms stage out only with their explosive performances, but also with their rocking outfits (by Pembuspict and make-up (by Rivoal Paris Studio Line and Maybelline). The exciting makeover is part of Nescafé Soundskool's competitionsize approach to making young bands on how to make it in the music scene.

"It definitely made us more confident about joining the industry," beams Aldrick Fu, vocalist of the winning band, Letters Day Story, which won P250,000 in cash, a Sony BMG record label deal and P100,000 worth of band set ups for their school.

Lorenzo Flores of UST's Theologans disagrees, "The makeover brought us a class and kept closer to being a star." Jerlyn Mae Asero of the Barrators seconds the motion. "Our Pembuspict outfits definitely helped us rock the stage." The Beatles also greatly appreciated the performance workshop in Boracay, where Sandwich, Sugar Free, SCPrincipal and Callalily backbones served as their mentors, along with speakers, Vic Valenciano and Dawnis Fernandez.

The other finalists were Keyb, (Hi)Fast, Nineteen Band, Yojoh-no, Shallow, Ensemble, The Band, Playrah, Blamcore, Project and Grace Thru. For details on next year's tilt, send your contact numbers to nescafesoundskool.com.ph.

Suzi checks the label

As a wife and mom, popular TV host, food fanatic Suzanne Gonzalez makes a point to give the best food and drink products to her family, so she checks the labels of products, to make sure that their nutrients are what her children need. This is especially true when choosing the right milk for them that best promotes growth, strong defense against illnesses, and cognitive development.

Key nutrients include calcium (good for teeth and bones), protein (for its muscle-building properties), good microorganisms fortified (to improve children's health) and DHA (for brain development). So, Suzi urges all parents to read the label, to know which products provide the optimum amount of nutrients and vitamins that their children really need.

ADRENA. Makes it a point to give the best food and drink products to her family.

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'Vicky Cristina Barcelona'

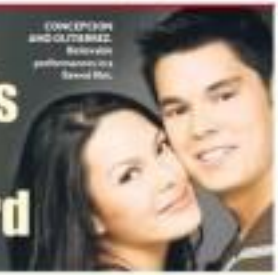
"Vicky Cristina Barcelona," Woody Allen's new romantic comedy about two American women and their amorous escapades in Barcelona, Spain, recently won the Golden Globes' Best Picture (Musical or Comedy) award. The film also garnered three nominations—for Best Actress (Rebecca Hall), Actor (Javier Bardem) and Supporting Actress (Penelope Cruz).

Vacationing in Spain, Vicky (Hall) and Cristina (Scarlett Johansson) meet Juan Antonio, a handsome painter (Bardem), who invites them to fly with him for a weekend trip to explore the wonders of love. Trouble is, his jealous ex-wife, Maria Elena (Cruz), makes a dramatic reappearance, so she has to be added to the already convoluted romantic equation in Allen's funny and wise meditation on love in all its exhilaration, heartache and mystery.

newsarticle

CRUZ. Plays a jealous ex-wife in Woody Allen's latest comedy.

SATURDAY Special



By Rito P. Asilo

"When I Met You"

Dr. Joel Lamangan
X Richard Gutierrez,
KC Concepcion

KC CONCEPCION AND RICHARD Gutierrez (clockwise in Joel Lamangan's "When I Met You," the beautiful couple's second collaboration as a love team. By accident, Jenny (Concepcion) finally finds the elusive "magical" kiss she's been dreaming about when she locks lips with Benjie (Gutierrez).

However, the unexpected smooch couldn't come at a worse time—the unassuming superstar lawyer gal and the struggling pilot find themselves sharing the spontaneous act of intimacy after engine trouble forces Benjie's Palawan-bound cargo plane to make an emergency landing that maroons the lovable pilot and his pint-size passenger in a deserted island. The romantic hiss turns mutual dislike into sweeping attraction instantly.

Looming threat

But, there's a hitch. Jenny's already-committed-to-her-overbearing-sweetmama-boyfriend, Albert (Alfred Vargas), while Benjie is unhappily stuck with the manipulative Tracy (Iya Villania). Things go from bad to worse when Albert and Tracy get wind of Benjie and Jenny's developing "situation." The scorned partners then team up to get rid of the looming threat to their respective relationships. The plot thickens.

Despite above-par production values, Lamangan's film is seventy-a fun movie and doesn't really offer anything new by story is too-sorta, one to engage viewers' attention and full sympathy. Moreover, it's too predictable and is littered with confounding implausibilities and hard-to-believe hang-ups moments (a wedding gown-clad KC dissed after Richard's departing plane in the middle of the airport runway, etc.). But, Mrs. Alfonso's script allows some of the movie's characters to rise above the muck of parody-riddled, illogical situations.

And, unlike "For The First Time," the production is not ruined by lofty cinematic goals it can't realize; it merely wants to tell the simple story of two people in love and how they manage to untangle themselves out of the convoluted mess their romance creates.

Suspension of disbelief

This time around, the easy rapport and onscreen chemistry of KC and Richard are more evident, so suspension of romantic disbelief isn't an issued concern.

The former RC's gawky, improvisational attitude toward acting is commendable, but it's both an asset and a liability: It makes her look sensational—and mindlessly—overzealous (a case of energy overcompensating for incompetence), and, because her character is supposed to be green and unsheltered, it likewise allows KC to find ways to break free from the polished consternation of an intelligent actress who grew up leading a sheltered life.

But, it's Richard who proves newly reinvented with a open-on performance that is as nuanced as it is empathetic, especially in the scene after his character is told that Jenny has decided to marry her overdrive boyfriend.

Yes, the guy is no longer just a pretty face, and we're hoping that Richard's generally and consistently don't stop here.

Jericho bounces back

By Edmund L. Straw

IT WAS A PAINFUL BREAKUP that left Jericho Hendrix devastated. He and longtime sweetheart, Heart Evangeline, finally admitted to the middle of 2008 that they had split up. Recently, the actor finally realized it was time to move on. I recently asked him what led to this realization. His reply: "The day my dog died." Hello?

"I realized I was focusing too much on the breakup," he explained. "When my dog died from cardiac arrest, I told myself, 'What am I doing?' I've neglected things in life that I care about. I love that dog more than most him. I had a good relationship with him." He was so affected by this event that he even wore an 'I'll' on his shirt in his honour, courtesy of his dad. Today, he has a total of four canine pets, two of them local breeds of squirt (young Pomeranians).

Dog lovers

Echo and Heart have always been dog lovers. In fact, they became endorsers of the Philippine Animal Welfare Society in its campaign, "Bee Beauty Beyond Breed," which aims to improve the image of canine canines.

Since Jericho has joined the cast of "Betty La Fea," our conversation turned to his concept of beauty. He means, "A beautiful girl is someone who embraces nature. She's not afraid to be adventurous. She's not insecure. There are girls who may not look that beautiful, pero 'pag dalawa-tatlo na, may mata sila, may daring."

As for as physical traits are concerned, Echo admits that he's partial to thin-skinned women, and he's also attracted to pony-tailed ladies with natural eyebrows.

He describes his character Alvin in "Betty La Fea" as "a beautiful sister to nobody on earth and he likes pointed, because he wears an island. So, sandals long stay wearing jeans and shirt, at minsan, naka-pants. He's rich but humble, very skinpile and runners-loving."

Love for surfing

Aside's love for surfing is said to be made for Echo, who's on mild fan of the sport. "It's a form of therapy for me. Inihali kasi ang rahod ko, so I got bored. It was Louie Villareal who introduced me to surfing. After that, naging hobby ko na."

Echo's favorite surfing spot is Baler, Aurora. There, he says he's been able to get in touch with his inner child. "Ang sarap ng feeling na you're one with the ocean. Ang sarap ng feeling na you're one with the ocean. Ang sarap ng feeling na you're one with the ocean.

More sugar than spice in Secondhand Serenade's 'Twist'

VERSUS: Get a record deal after he posted his album on MySpace.

By Rinalyn Torre

SOMETIMES, LESS IS MORE. A room and his guitar, for example, can sometimes sound better than a room, a full band and a production team, complete with a couple of music producers. Secondhand Serenade, otherwise known as singer-songwriter John Vesely, answered a few basic and get himself a record deal after he posted his self-produced album, "Awake," on MySpace a few years ago, and he seemed to seriously this time.

That was then, however, before fame, a bigger budget, and the recording companies came knocking. Now, clearly apparent, is how the idea of more being more, something that's honestly only apparent in his follow-up album, "A Twist in My Story."

Produced by Jimmy Lahaye (basically of Nine Inch Nails), with Butch Walker (Avril Lavigne, All American Rejects) lending his production expertise to the song "Fall For You," Vesely's sophomore album has a bigger, more polished sound. Some songs from "Awake"—like "Your Call" and "Maybe"—are included here, but the rest is new material.

But, instead of making Secondhand Serenade's music more appealing, the added production elements only seem to make it worse. For, it sounds smooth and radio-friendly—problem is, the music is already very smooth and radio-friendly to begin with. At last, it's hard to distinguish Vesely's music from the winds of desire-something executed seemingly taking the airwaves.

Intended recipient

Vesely does know how to sing, but not even the greatest pipes in the world can make this stuff sound original (unless they were, say, Tom Waits'). By the time the fifth song rolls in, his supposedly beautiful swooning begins to sound whiny and you start feeling sorry for the intended recipient of these songs.

According to the artist, this would be his valley. In fact, all his songs are for her, and we're over all eavesdropping on this one-sided musical conversation. (Since the name Secondhand Serenade). Judging by the songs' lyrics, it's a very up-and-down relationship, too. In one track, he sings, "I'll give up all that I have just to breathe the same air as you is the day that I die." But, in another, he says, "Hours, let me be free from you." It makes you wonder what he thought in-between the two.

What Secondhand Serenade needs to set it apart from the middling mankind carved is an edgier feel and more spice, in terms of sweetness. Now that the vague content has been further streamlined, you end up with something that's curiously soulless. The songs seem to blend into each other, and everything sounds like you've already heard it before.

If this were acoustic or more stripped down, maybe it would have sounded more real. As it is, though, "A Twist in My Story" sounds like just another drawn-out, over-pop record with slick production values and little heart.

Oprah's New Age episodes rile Catholic viewers

By Lito Borlongan-Abrasco

WE HAVE BEEN A HUGE FAN of Oprah and her TV program for many years now, because of her generosity, inspiring stories, and positive interest in bringing out the best in people. We have yet to find a warmer and more compassionate high-profile media personality.

However, recent episodes of her show have caused the ire of devout Catholics for supporting Scientology and endorsing "A New Earth" by the program's book club selection, accompanied by an online feature with spiritual teachers Eckhart Tolle. (Checkbook on How Age-spotted ability and seminal to maximum power Christian marriage. (Tolle says that the awareness of one's true identity and being is self-realization and true happiness, and that the New Testament contains certain divine flaws.)

HOMEBET: How controversy for the popular TV host.

Reaction

Viewers sent their responses via the Catholic Answers Forum online. One e-mail entitled the title, "The Gospel according to Oprah Winfrey," how did one come to do so the cross," while another third viewer said that the TV host "has taken her precedent of labor religion to a new level" by endorsing Tolle's teaching that "all religions are equally false and true, depending on how you see them" and "that the purpose of Jesus' coming was to teach us 'Eckhart concentration.'"

Another upset viewer observed that Oprah had been "hanging around Tom Cruise and John Travolta too much." One irate viewer said she had begun to dislike Oprah "because of her refusal to question Scientology," and another urged her to "stop subverting Jesus."

True faithful viewers, however, can't see why anyone would believe everything that Oprah says. "She is not a theologian, nor is she one of the great thinkers of the century...she is just a talk show host."

We think this is precisely the problem. No gullible or naive viewer is going to argue with Oprah because she's an influential figure. Some viewers came to her defense by saying, "She could still do much good, and she will eventually find the right path."

Other open-minded and level-headed viewers say that if they don't agree with Oprah's views, they simply switch channels. Their take: "It's interesting to see the views of the other side, which enable us to learn something from any speaker if we keep an open mind."

Last we let remember to avoid for passing judgment, we are reminded that Oprah won't be indicted to further "chaos" her words publicly on controversial issues concerning religion and politics.

Pinoy heritage...

From page 14

model, Meagan Hendin, elegantly carried his Dolkin creations. Bilegan wore this casual jewelry sampled by Will Lane, with shoes from Amore Fisherman. The model of the other finalists followed, sporting jewelry by Yemba Tuazig, Brigitte Rinehill, Fred Leighton, William Goldberg and Mauricio Gan.

Thunderous applause

Then, the designers and their models were called to appear together onstage and were met with a thunderous round applause from the media and other guests. After the show, we congratulated Gwendolyn Alan and Bongco, a contemporary bronzery boutique in "Just a little bit," Alan added.

BAUTISTA: Portal to his childhood memories.

Gershwin classic

Her favorite love song is the George Gershwin classic, "Someone to Watch Over Me" ("There's a somebody I'm longing to see/ I hope that he turns out to be/ Someone who'll watch over me/ I'm a little lamb who's lost in the woods/ I know I could always be good/ To one who'll watch over me").

And what is this favorite love song of Sportsking/Sports Queen about? "That's an instrument. It has to be 'To Be Human,'" a song he composed for Gary Valenciano which also effectively made it one of the most popular OPM hits in the country. ("Sana'ban na ito na mate/ Bumalos/sakay ang aking puso/ Ang sali sa ilong/ Ang sumasa/ Ito/ Di na natin/ Ito/ Ito/ Ito

Pinoy heritage inspires Oscar gown designer finalist

ALAN DEL ROSARIO (right) presents his gown, worn by model Margaret Nowicki, at the "Oscar's Designer's Challenge" runway fashion show at the Academy's headquarters in Beverly Hills. Fourth from right is Alan, who is competing with six other designers in the fashion challenge, at www.oscar.com. Online voting ends Feb. 15. — PHOTOGRAPH BY NEWS

LOS ANGELES — "MY FILIPINO HERITAGE is always an inspiration," Alan Del Rosario proclaimed, half an hour before he and six other designers presented their gown creation in a fashion contest called "Oscar's Designer Challenge" last Tuesday morning at the Academy's Beverly Hills headquarters.

My mere on the second floor interviewing Alan and his fellow finalists as they held up their fashion creations, one of which will be chosen by the public in an online voting. The winning gown will be worn on-stage by one of the trophy presenters during the month-anticipated Oscar show on Feb. 22.

The nineteen designers will each get to attend the event with a guest, but the two Filipinos are not going on the cake, compared to the world-wide exposure and publicity that he or she will get.

If he was a bit nervous, Alan, a former civil engineer who went to the University of San Jose Recoletos in Cebu, did not show it. In all "glitter" black, Alan was smiling and friendly as media reporters, photographers and TV entertainers queued up to get some sound bites from him. He proudly showed off his finish face mermaid gown. Beside him were his rivals, who, like him, come with impressive credentials—their bios list of numerous awards and impressive work experience.

ONLY IN HOLLYWOOD

Rubeen V. Nepomuceno

Finalists

The seven designers are not exactly novices. Standing next to Alan, and getting her share of media attention, was Mitch Pinto, whose dresses have been worn by US First Lady Michelle Obama. She designed Michelle's Inaugural Day dress. Also looking over our one interview was the other Filipino finalist: Marianne Rosimano. Robert Rodriguez, Anne Rice George, Mario Tomey and Nicole Pafchicki.

"I was stunned," Alan replied when we asked how he reacted upon being chosen by Betty Ann, Oscar fashion coordinator, and Lawrence Mark and Bill Condon, Oscar telecast producers, as one of the seven finalists. "It's one of the greatest opportunities you can have as a designer. And with me being in Hollywood, this could go out as well."

He explained his inspirations for his stunning gown: "I tried to update old Hollywood glamour and make it more relevant today." With his background in civil engineering, Alan shared, "I design very graphically and structurally. I love to play with the human figure."

He learned that Monique Gualbert, who's also from Cebu, is a good friend of his. He shared, "Monique and I went to school together at the FEMI (Fashion Institute of Design & Merchandising). She's like a little sister to me." Alan won the Bob Mackie Award when he was a student at FEMI.

Cebu roots

At his Cebu roots, he enthused: "I go home as often as I can. I still have family there." Based in Los Angeles, Alan has several fashion lines. "Perhaps my Alan Del Rosario" is described by the Academy's press notes as a "very sophisticated, lushly tone label." "Alan Del Rosario" is his eponymous line. "Bow & Arrow by Alan Del Rosario" is characterized as a modern woman's wardrobe line. Among the attendees who have worn his creations to fashion shows on the red carpet and TV shows are Drew Barrymore, Michelle Pfeiffer and Debra Messing.

After the interviews, reporters were asked to return to the lobby for the runway fashion show. The place was transformed overnight into a space fit for a fashion show, complete with a runway covered with red carpet. Patty Wen, author of "Star Style at the Academy Awards," introduced and chatted with each of the finalist designers, then called on their respective models to show off their gown creation.

Since the finalists were called in alphabetical order based on their first names, Alan opened the show on a high note as his

PINOY 2

Celebrities' most cherished love songs

By Edmund L. Sison

PAOLO BALLESTEROS sang LIZA MINNELLI's "Maybe It's You" DURING special assignment.

IF YOU DIED, ask Carmen who said is best: "You'd think that people would have had enough of silly love songs! But I took second one and I never ain't no! Some people wanna fill the world with silly love songs! And what's wrong with that?! I'd like to know 'cause here I go again: I love you."

Yes, indeed! What's wrong with that? Without them, Valentine's Day, which festivals all over the world celebrate today, would not be complete. One such inevitable romantic is Pido Pascual who declares love as "happening every time that that special person is in the point of losing you could."

Best sunset

And he would bring that special person to Amalfi in Italy which he considers the most romantic place on earth. He gushes, "It's located on top of a mountain, and it's warm outside there. It has the best sunset in Italy, and pure Italian are so pleasant."

And what song would he sing to that special someone? That would have to be his favorite love song, and I Wind in You" by "Ed," which he first heard in the movie, "Notting Hill," starring his favorite actress, Vanessa Redgrave. ("Kiss me you'll give me/ A highway with no one on it/ Treasure just to look upon it/ All the colors in the night/ You say you'll give me/ Eternity consist of Mondays/ A river runs inside of dreams/ A bamboo in the emperor/ But all the minutes we make/ Pretty like cardboard/ Give me grace/ When all I want is you.")

Melody

Christine Bendijo hasn't found his special someone yet. For a while, people thought it was Rachelle Ann Go, but that relationship is over and Christine is still looking. It's probably in anticipation of that moment that he says his favorite love song is "I Finally Found Someone" sung by Bryan Adams and Barbra Streisand. ("This is it/ Oh I finally found someone/ Someone to share my life/ I finally found the one/ To be with every night/ Because whatever I do/ It's just for to your life/ My life just begins/ I finally found someone.") "Any gonda ng melody" he explained. "Any song as long as my conversation going on. It's

CELEBRITIES, p.

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